

The right wing's hypocrisy in action again
Daughter of homophobe Alan Keyes comes out;
gets kicked out of home, but gets scholarship.

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We're here, we're queer
Identity issues discussed
at genderqueer conference.

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Miller's crossing
Gay immigration
hassles in 'Us.'

see Arts section



BAY AREA REPORTER

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Newsom defiant on anniversary of San Francisco's gay marriages



Mayor Gavin Newsom addresses
thousands of same-sex couples on the
first anniversary of the gay marriages.

by Matthew S. Bajko

Celebrating the one-year anniversary of San Francisco's historic same-sex marriages, Mayor Gavin Newsom showed no sign of backing down in the fight for marriage equality.

"We will prevail. There is no turning back," Newsom told a crowd of 3,000 people packed under the rotunda of City Hall Saturday, February 12.

The mayor had invited the nearly 4,000 couples who married last winter to a special reception Saturday morning to mark the occasion.

"Happy anniversary," Newsom said while

standing at the bottom of the grand staircase inside City Hall. "I am so proud of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community."

He also had a message for those politicians who are fighting against allowing same-sex couples to wed, especially those lawmakers who court the gay vote but do not support gay marriage.

"I think it is time to hold elected officials accountable," said Newsom. "Don't let them tell you civil unions are good enough. Civil unions are not acceptable. You deserve more than that. Marriage is marriage."

He also took on conservatives and antigay groups who argue that since marriage has tra-

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NYC AIDS case warrants caution, local experts say

by Liz Highleyman

As word spread in the press and on the Internet this week about an isolated case of rapidly progressing, multidrug-resistant HIV in New York City, local AIDS experts say that there's not yet enough information to draw firm conclusions, but agree that renewed emphasis on HIV prevention is in order.

"Whether last week's announcement is an isolated incident or the dawn of a new age of AIDS, it's a wake-up call, and serves as a reminder of the very real possibility of a new potent strain of HIV emerging among us," Jason Riggs, communications director at the Stop AIDS Project told the Bay Area Reporter.

Although some press reports have characterized the unidentified New York City man as having a new strain of HIV, experts say it's far from clear that this is the case. Reports also have stated that the man, who is in his mid-40s, engaged in unprotected anal sex with other men on multiple occasions while using crystal methamphetamine.

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They're here! Big bear party is this weekend

by Jeffrey M. Glover



Planning for bear bash: From left, BOSF President Darwin Bebo, Ric Reed, Ray Middling, Chuck Rudd, and Rich Tramontozzi put the finishing touches on plans for this weekend's International Bear Rendezvous.

While the residents of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania may rely on a groundhog to predict the remaining weeks of winter, the residents of San Francisco know that spring is definitely on the way when the bears come out of hibernation. Over 1,000 bears from all over the world are expected to be in town this weekend, celebrating International Bear Rendezvous's 11th year at the Ramada Plaza Hotel at 8th and Market streets.

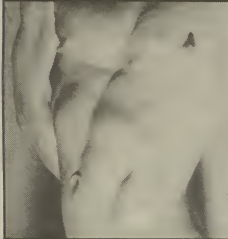
Founded in 1994 by the Bears of San Francisco, IBR has become one of the premiere bear events throughout the country, along with Chicago's "Bear Pride," Denver's "Octobearfest," and Orlando's "BearBust." While other bear events have come and gone, IBR remains one of the country's biggest and most popular annual parties.

That's no small feat considering that IBR is produced by a new group of bears each year, yet the members still manage to pull it off with hardly a hitch. At the helm this year is BOSF President Darwin Bebo.

"All I can say is, kudos to those that laid

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Contra Costa's Rainbow center undergoes changes

by Zak Szymanski

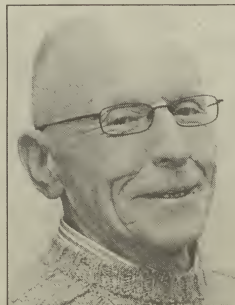
As part of a major budget restructuring effort, the Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa County has moved its offices and reduced its staff, the organization announced at the end of last month. All programs remain intact at the nine-year-old LGBT center, which has a budget of about \$186,000 and regularly serves about 1,700 people. The center recently relocated to the New Connections Building, 3024 Willow Pass Road, Suite 200, in Concord.

Cuts to the center's staff include former Executive Director Debbie Weill and former program director Ilsa Bertolini. The staff cuts were described by board President Brian James as "a drastic move, and one that we avoided as long as we could."

Filling the leadership vacancy as an unpaid acting executive director is Dr. Kent Sack, a founding member of the center. The board will assume programming responsibilities.

Sack said his service to the center is a labor of love.

"I have a real loyalty and am certainly committed to the pro-



Interim director Dr. Kent Sack

gramming and mission of the center, and I have been since the very beginning," said Sack, who added that despite the changes, the center's move and staff cuts were "preventative actions" to keep the organization in the black, and that everything is stable.

"We feel settled already. The remaining staff members have been able to plug into all the projects, events, and collaborations out there and I don't think we've really missed a beat," he said.

Two half-time members — a youth coordinator and administrative assistant — are still employed, and the center is looking to increase its volunteers.

Other plans for the budgetary restructuring include outcome assessments of existing programs to see which need expanding or changing, said Sack.

"We felt our senior programming was less than optimal. Our ability to measure outcomes in the youth area has also not been adequate," said Sack. "We're going to take a look at various support groups and make sure they are adequately facilitated, and that the numbers are there to justify things like the cost of lights and rent."

The center may also look to join forces with other area nonprofits in order to share a centralized administration, which would require a buy-in by those groups and possibly a tenancy in the new human services oriented building.

"Part of this whole rethinking process started long before our move, and addressed the question, 'What is really the future for small

nonprofits?'" said Sack. "Many of us are looking with an eye to the future. We believe it involves a strong central administration, which provides services to many small nonprofits, and specific, strong program leaders in the various programs that would fall under that administration. It's currently just a dream, but as we discuss this with other nonprofits, it develops merits. Collaborative work is where we're going to have to go. We have to become creative rather than shrink or withdraw."

Any such collaboration, said Sack, would require at least a year of planning. In the meantime, he said, the center is "endowment rich" and has just concluded a successful fundraising membership campaign.

"It's always difficult to change, and you always lose something in that process. It often involves losing valuable people," said Sack. But having now gone through the changes, said Sack, the center and its board is "re-invigorated." ▼

For more information, visit
www.rainbowcc.org or call
(925) 692-0090.

Correction

The story "Hansen named to Ethics Commission" that ran February 10 incorrectly attributed a quote to long-time political observer Arthur Evans.

The quote, "Hansen is a political ally of the board's liberal majority" actually is attributable to the *San Francisco Chronicle* and was not made by Evans.

In fact, in widely distributed e-mails, Evans said he was critical of the process surrounding Hansen's appointment to the Ethics Commission because he wanted her to address her past record of alleged ethics violations and wished for the matter to go back to committee before it was voted upon. Evans also said that he would have supported Hansen over former Commissioner Michael Garcia. We regret the error.



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Concerns about efforts to 'de-gay' Polk Street

by Zak Szymanski

A debate about the re-opening of a popular gay bar on Polk Street may be an indication of where the neighborhood is headed and what the future holds for the historic gay district.

Club Rendez-Vous, which operated at 1312 Polk Street for almost six years, closed at the end of 2004 to accommodate the building's new owners, who plan to demolish the structure and build a church. Rendez-Vous owners had always planned to re-open the venue, according to Paul Xavier, a partner in the business, so when a space became available at 1224 Polk, they signed a temporary lease and made plans to secure a change of use permit to operate that space as a bar.

As part of the process of relocation, Xavier and his business partner David Kapp then attended the meetings of Lower Polk Neighbors, a three-year-old association concerned with quality of life issues that works closely with local law enforcement and holds regular votes on whether to support certain businesses. That's when it became apparent that organized opposition to the bar was strong.

"It was a group of people that had nothing good to say," said Xavier, describing the meetings in which Lower Polk Neighbors



Rendez-Vous co-owner David Kapp.

members expressed concern about the types of people Club Rendez-Vous attracted while in business.

At one of the meetings, the association presented the bar owners with two complaint letters that were reportedly sent to the bar over the last couple of years, neither of which Kapp or Xavier said they ever received.

At issue for the association is the loitering and hanging out that occurred regularly on the sidewalk in front of the bar.

"We asked them if they would talk to us about being good neighbors, and we had a couple meetings with them about that," Carolyn Abst, chair of Lower Polk

Neighbors, told the Bay Area Reporter. "There have been neighborhood complaints. What we had noticed was that people were allowed to be drunk on the sidewalk out front, and were allowed to lie down on the street, and nothing was done to help the neighborhood deal with this."

Xavier and Kapp countered that their bar was the only open business on the block, and as such, received a disproportionate amount of the blame for anyone who happened to be on the street, even if they were not customers.

"We tried to explain how difficult it was to police an entire block when we were the only business open," said Xavier. "Their response was basically that we didn't do enough to clean up that block."

In fact, they spent so much of their time calling the police to remove people who were not customers from the street that police now appear to be holding that against them as they seek to reopen.

"You're way over the limit for calls. You average 10 calls a month," Officer John Gallagher, with the San Francisco Police Department's Northern Station, told Rendez-Vous owners at an association meeting on Monday, February 14. It is Gallagher's department that makes the final recommendation to the city's planning department on whether to grant

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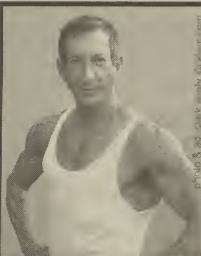
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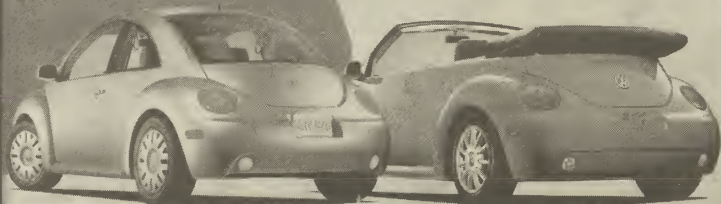


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Chinese New Year Parade to feature gay wedding float

compiled by Cynthia Laird

After an absence of a couple years, the Gay Asian Pacific Alliance returns to San Francisco's Chinese New Year Parade and the group's float will show support for same-sex marriage.

The parade, one of the city's largest, takes place Saturday, February 19 starting at 5:30 p.m., at Market and Second streets downtown and turns right on Geary Street, right on Powell, right on Post, and left on Kearny, ending at Kearny Street and Columbus Avenue in Chinatown.

GAPA member Robert Bernardo said that the group's float (contingent #113) is set to include a large multi-layer wedding cake with two same-sex couples standing alongside. The couples will be wearing traditional Chinese ceremonial wedding attire. Other GAPA members and supporters will walk alongside the float, dressed in festive red jackets emblazoned with Chinese characters that illustrate support for marriage equality.

"This parade is the most-attended and most-watched Asian parade outside of the Asian continent," said Clarence Wong, an organizer for the event. Wong added that parade participants hope to "show our Asian brothers and sisters that everyone deserves the freedom to marry."

This year marks Lunar New Year 4703, the Year of the Cock. GAPA is sponsoring the float

along with Marriage Equality California/Equality California.

For more information about GAPA, visit www.gapa.org.

Meeting to 'Create Change'

Creating Change, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's signature conference, is returning to Oakland later this year, and local activists can attend an informational meeting Tuesday, February 22 at 7 p.m. in the AJ Toppers Room at the Oakland Marriott, 1001 Broadway in Oakland.

This year's event, scheduled for November 9-13, marks only the second time Creating Change has returned to a host city, organizers said. At the last conference in Oakland, in 1999, hundreds of conference attendees converged on the Oakland Police Department headquarters after a young transgender woman (who was not attending the conference) was allegedly assaulted. That led to LGBT activists meeting with police and establishing a liaison to the community.

Creating Change started in 1987 and has developed into the nation's largest and most unique skills building and strategy conference for queer activists.

Task force representative Julie Childs is expected to attend next week's meeting, along with local LGBT residents. There is no need to RSVP, but those seeking more information can e-mail Childs at jchilds@thetaskforce.org.

The Marriott Hotel is across the street from the 12th Street

BART station.

Closing party for Milk exhibit

The GLBT Historical Society will host a closing party for its long-running "St. Harvey" exhibit Wednesday, February 23 at 657 Mission Street, Suite 300 (between New Montgomery and Third streets) in San Francisco. The reception takes place from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., and is free and open to the public. It will include a brief program of comments about the late Supervisor Harvey Milk and his legacy by his friend Daniel Nicoletta, historical society Executive Director Terence Kissack, and other local leaders.

"Saint Harvey has been an ideal first exhibit for the GLBT Historical Society's museum space," Kissack said. "Simultaneously controversial, moving, and educational, the exhibit has been very popular."

The focal point of the exhibit is Milk's bloodstained suit that he was wearing when he was assassinated by ex-Supervisor Dan White in 1978.

The historical society is already working on its next exhibit, "Sporting Life: LGBT Athletics and Cultural Change from the 1960s to Today." That exhibit, which opens April 2, will tell the story of Bay Area LGBT sports, starting with the first bowling and softball games against the police department and the birth of the Gay Games.

For more information on the historical society, visit www.glbthistory.org or call (415) 777-5455. Organizers of the sports exhibit are seeking donations of

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Planned Parenthood defends its condoms

by Ed Walsh

Planned Parenthood is standing behind its brand of condoms despite a *Consumer Reports* study that gave low marks to two of the three varieties of condoms that it distributes through its clinics.

Of the 23 styles and brands of condoms that CR tested for a report published in its February issue, Planned Parenthood's "Assorted Colors" and "Honeydew" scored the lowest, although those varieties and all the condoms CR tested passed the minimum in-

dustry standards.

Planned Parenthood's "Lolipop" style fared better, ranking 14th in CR's study.

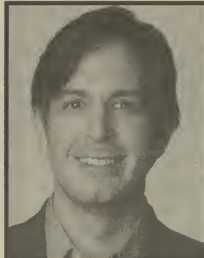
In a statement published on Planned Parenthood's Web site it responded: "We were very pleased that *Consumer Reports* gave one of our styles of Planned Parenthood Condoms excellent ratings. As soon as we became aware of *Consumer Reports*' concerns about two other styles of our condoms, we immediately commissioned rigorous, comprehensive retesting at a world-renowned, independent testing facility. The results on all scientific measures were excellent,

as were the results of the air inflation test performed by *Consumer Reports* itself. We will continue to conduct rigorous testing and monitoring to ensure that all of our condoms remain top-quality products."

CR tested the condoms by inflating them with air until they burst.

"The best had no premature breakage among the 120 samples we tested for each model," the article explained. "When inflated, they also averaged at least 38 liters of air. The worst, however, broke 18 of 120 times at volumes below our

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Jamaican gay leaders seek U.S. help

by Matthew S. Bajko

There is a life that conjures up America's past, when gay men and lesbians feared the consequences of their sexuality being discovered and hid behind closed doors. In a city dubbed by many as a gay mecca, they jealously guard their full identities, mindful of the dangers that could await them back home if their countrymen knew their truth.

"Jamaica is so close to the U.S. and with the Internet, within hours things could get back to Jamaica," said Karlene. "If we got on the plane..."

"We might not be able to get off," finished Gareth.

Karlene added, "We talk out but we have to hide."

Gareth and Karlene, who asked that their last names be withheld and that any photos not reveal their faces, are the newly elected co-chairs of the Jamaican Forum of Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays, or simply JFLAG. They have been visiting gay rights leaders throughout the country as well as the staff members of U.S. politicians, seeking help in gaining rights for LGBT people in their homeland.

"Homophobia is so thick in Jamaica. It is good to raise awareness among agencies and people outside Jamaica and ask for their support," said Karlene, 35, a lesbian activist and executive assistant. "We hope they can in some way have the authorities here put pressure on our government to put in place policies to protect our rights as people."

The two began their trip January 28 and have visited gay activists in New York, Washington D.C., Atlanta, Chicago, and Detroit. After stopping in San Francisco this past week, the pair left Wednesday for Los Angeles and return to Jamaica this Sunday.

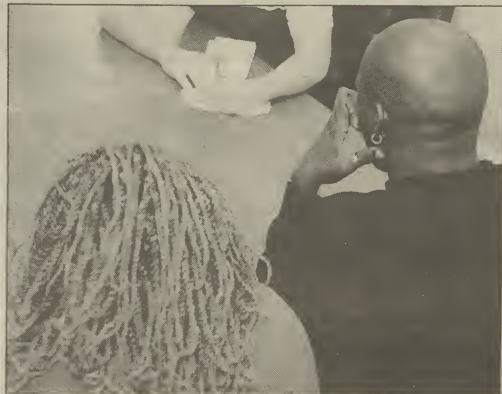
In an hour-long interview with the *Bay Area Reporter* Monday, February 14 at the local offices of Amnesty International, which is sponsoring their trip, the two discussed the homophobia and outright violence LGBT people face in their country.

According to a 2004 report by Human Rights Watch, violent acts against men who have sex with men are commonplace in Jamaica. The report states, "Verbal and physical violence, ranging from beatings to brutal armed attacks to murder, are widespread. For many, there is no sanctuary from such abuse."

Gay men and lesbians in Jamaica recounted to the international organization being driven from their homes and their towns by neighbors who threatened to kill them if they remained, "forcing them to abandon their possessions and leaving many homeless" states the report.

In July 2004, for example, JFLAG received an e-mail threatening to gun down "gays and homosexuals" and "clean up" a group that provided HIV/AIDS education for youth.

Gareth, 27, who is gay, said he could only be out at work because he is in HIV education. In 2002, he said a mob led by a policeman ran him out of his hometown of Portmore, not far from the capital of Kingston, where both he and Karlene now live.



Jamaican gay activists Karlene and Gareth visited SF this week.

"I was physically abused by the police. His thing was since I was gay I had to leave the community," said Gareth. "In 2004 I witnessed two police men beat a guy almost to death."

The incident occurred on the beach, and according to Gareth, the policemen's actions instigated a mob of nearly 40 people to beat the man to death after the police left.

"When we tried to interface with the police we got no response. They said there wouldn't be any arrests because they said no one was coming forward to identify the suspects," he said. "When we offered to identify people and the police officers who instigated the beating, we were turned down."

It is a memory that still haunts him, said Gareth.

"For me, I have to live with that situation to this date. It could have been me. I was only 50 meters away," he said. And yet "I couldn't do anything to help. I feared for my own life. I had to stand there and watch that. No one deserves to die like that because he was alleged to be a homosexual."

While Karlene has not been physically abused, she has encountered verbal harassment. She said several lesbians she knows have been raped "because guys in

the area don't see any other men visiting her. They think she obviously needs a man in her life so they broke into her home and raped her."

Four men beat another female friend because of her masculine appearance, while another had to leave her job after a coworker abused her daily. The woman had appeared on a television show to talk about being a lesbian. While her identity was kept hidden, her male coworker recognized her voice.

The women, out of fear and intimidation, don't report such incidents to the police, said Karlene.

"You can't go to the police; they laugh at you," she said. "It is very frustrating."

Twilight zone

Jamaica's LGBT community lives in a twilight zone, where gay American and European tourists can vacation in relative security yet gay locals face intolerable cruelty.

"Gay people can travel there. Within the walls of the hotels they are safe," said Karlene.

Gareth added, "They are foreigners. If not a Jamaican, it is all right."

Many Jamaicans, said Karlene, see homosexuality as something

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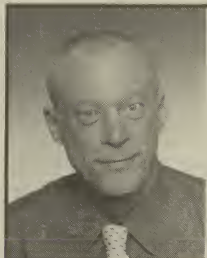


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A wake-up call

We write this with the knowledge that the information we have currently now is incomplete and subject to change. That said, the news out of New York City last Friday about a possible new virulent strain of the HIV virus that is resistant to virtually all the current drugs should serve as a wake-up call to gay men everywhere. The unidentified man who presented with the virus is reported to have engaged in unprotected anal intercourse with numerous men while using crystal methamphetamine—a dangerous combination.

There is nothing new about drug resistant strains of HIV. Scientists have reported such findings for several years. There is also nothing new about the relationship between crystal meth and HIV. In San Francisco, AIDS prevention advocates have been sounding that alarm for years as well, and many different prevention campaigns have taken place, all with the goal of letting gay men know that crystal use is associated with increased risk of HIV transmission. In short, we don't want to panic people. But when the largest newspaper in the country, the *New York Times*, uses its megaphone—as it has since last week with several stories on the case and its possible implications—people should take notice.

Steven Gibson, the director of Magnet, the gay men's health clinic in the Castro, told us this week that he is concerned, but like everyone else we spoke with, emphasized that much about the New York City case is unknown. Gays have also expressed concern about the way in which the news was released—at a press conference without any firm scientific evidence—but there is a valid argument to be made that had health officials kept the information to themselves and the new strain turns out to be verified, there would have been a firestorm of criticism. Much of that probably would have come from the gay community.

Gibson said that men have come into the clinic inquiring about the news. "Gay men do care," he insisted, "and at Magnet our HIV testing fills up." He also said that at Magnet, at least, "most infections are not

happening because of deliberate exposure."

Michael Siever, Ph. D., director of the Stonewall Project, which provides a harm reduction strategy for substance abuse (particularly crystal meth), acknowledged that speed use is a problem for many gay men. It's highly addictive and lessens inhibitions, meaning that people are more likely to engage in unsafe sex while using the drug. It also weakens the immune system. "Clearly, a lot of people get into trouble with it," he told us. And over the years we've written many stories about the devastating effects of crystal. People have lost jobs, housing, and relationships. Gays in New York City this week also talked about how they became HIV-positive after days of unprotected sex while using the drug.

But Siever said his mission is to provide a "nuanced balance," when it comes to speed use. He also correctly pointed out that peo-

ple make dumb decisions and do stupid things all the time, like smoking cigarettes.

"Seven years ago, just into the protease inhibitors, we talked about why guys 'slipped,'" Siever said. "Someone said, 'when people were dying in front of me, I couldn't forget to wear a condom. Now, it's easy to forget.'"

That may be the lesson as we wait for more definitive answers in the days and weeks ahead.

Ultimately, Gibson warns against vilifying people and said that is not the answer. Nor is the answer going to be found by having the government on the prowl in venues like sex clubs and private parties. "The community has to monitor itself," he said, "and the hardest question is: how many new infections will gay men tolerate?"

In a city like San Francisco, with an estimated 50,000 to 65,000 gay men, that may indeed be the hardest question of all. ▼

Editorial

IN OTHER NEWS, REPORTERS ARE STILL ASKING HOW A CONSERVATIVE JOURNALIST WITH PAPER-THIN CREDENTIALS GOT INTO WHITE HOUSE PRESS CONFERENCES TO ASK POWDER-PUFF QUESTIONS.

OTHER JOURNALISTS ARE NOW ASKING: HAS THE BLOGOSPHERE GONE TOO FAR BY PRYING INTO A MAN'S PERSONAL LIFE?

JEFF GANNON, aka JAMES D. GUCKERT, ABRUPTLY RESIGNED AFTER BLOGGERS FOUND HE HAD REGISTERED DOMAIN NAMES FOR MALE ESCORT WEBSITES.

FOR MORE, WE TURN TO OUR SENIOR MEDIA CORRESPONDENT, MONICA LEWINSKY.

Bush, fake science, and LGBT families

by Joel Ginsberg

Make no mistake (as the president is fond of saying): our health and well-being are under attack.

Recent statements from the Bush administration demonstrate clear hostility to the mental and physical health needs of LGBT Americans and their children.

On January 27, President Bush stated in an interview with the *New York Times* that "studies have shown that the ideal is where a child is raised in a married family with a man and a woman."

Huh? Studies have not shown this; studies, in fact, show just the opposite.

Says who? Last month, the journal *Child Development* published a report using data from a national longitudinal study of adolescent health funded by the National Institutes of Health. The study looked at 44 randomly selected families headed by female same-sex couples. The study showed that, when compared to an equal number of control families headed by opposite-sex couples, "the personal, family, and school adjustment of adolescents living with same-sex parents did not differ from that of adolescents living with opposite-sex parents." The authors concluded, "The clarity of results from this broad array of assessments strengthens our confidence that adolescents living with same-sex parents were functioning well in many domains, both at home and at school."

There's more: In 2002, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a statement which declared that because kids raised in same-sex parent households do just as well on all measures of health as children raised in opposite sex parent households, pediatricians should "advocate for initiatives that establish permanency through co-parent or second-parent adoption for children of same-sex partners through the judicial sys-

tem, legislation, and community education." The American Academy of Family Physicians has issued a similar policy statement.

In line with the president's unscientific broadside on LGBT families, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings attacked the Public Broadcasting Service for planning to air an episode of a children's show called *Postcards From Buster* that depicted lesbian mothers, saying, "Many parents would not want children exposed to a lesbian lifestyle."

In the series, Buster, an animated rabbit, introduces and narrates live-action segments that show real children and how they live. Among his guests and friends have been single-parent families, Mormons in Utah, a family of five living in a trailer, American Indians, Hmong, and fundamentalist Christians and Muslims.

Hmmm. Invent scientific "studies" that "prove" that gay families are unhealthy. Then use the bully pulpit to intimidate broadcasters so they will self-censor and pretend that gay families don't even exist. Why? Presumably, President Bush will do everything he can to promote the ideas—long since disproven by real scientific studies—that homosexuality is an abnormal and harmful "lifestyle" choice and that if people—and especially children—are taught the truth that they are more likely—heaven forefend—to become homosexual themselves.

Sadly, the administration distorts science in many areas, not just LGBT health. One year ago, the Union of Concerned Scientists released a report that was endorsed by 60 influential scientists, including 20 Nobel laureates, which criticized administration policies that misrepresented scientific knowledge and misled the public about the implications of those policies.

There is mounting evidence that LGBT people experience real disparities in health

care. On average, we smoke more, drink more, and are more depressed than heterosexuals. Because of our bad experiences with healthcare professionals, many of us avoid getting lifesaving vaccinations and cancer screenings.

The administration must not be allowed to play politics with our lives, to permit ideology to trump science when making health policy.

Mandates are created by loud voices speaking unequivocally about their needs. When a few loud voices on the right say that science that should be perverted, it is. We need to raise our voices in opposition, to say that this is not only unacceptable; it is immoral.

So what can you do? Write your representatives in Congress to protest the president's anti-family policies. Write to your local PBS station to tell them that children who live with lesbian

mothers need to be seen by America just as much as anyone else. Write to Margaret Spellings, the secretary of education, and tell her that you're offended by her effort to make the lives of some children unequal.

And call your friends in St. Louis, Baton Rouge, Cincinnati, and Louisville, and other cities around the country and tell them to do this, too. Politicians need to know it's not just people in San Francisco who feel this way.

Sometimes we forget that people hold power because we let them. If we tell them in letters, e-mails and phone calls that we're willing to take back that power, they will listen and it may even give them the courage to do what's right. ▼

Joel Ginsberg is the interim executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association. For more information, visit www.glma.org.

LETTERS

Packing pistols now irrelevant

Thanks for the article on the Pink Pistols [*"Guns and gay rights directly linked, say some," February 10*]. They seem to be getting a lot of attention lately. As a pseudo-political group, in a historic sense, I wouldn't put them in a logical, progressive step in our community's development. They do not fall into the order of progression that created such groups as the Mattachine Society, the Gay Liberation Movement, ACT UP, and Queer Nation. Those groups were formed out of a period when our community was in real crisis and needed an organized, grassroots movement to pull us through. Those groups became the building blocks of much larger movements, like the current, dynamic one for marriage rights. If anything, the PPs are about 30 years too late, when at the time of militant, minority-based struggles, we could've used a couple of pistol packing queers. What happened instead was we organized many community-policing "whistle" campaigns, we fought back, sometimes with our fists, we highlighted our issues to the community and local police, and we made sure they never had a moment's rest so long as our brothers and sisters were getting bashed. Because of this hard work, San Francisco is perhaps the safest place on the planet to be openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

Packing pistols now is not only irrelevant it's actually antithetical to fostering a peaceful relationship with our straight neighbors. Guns aren't getting our marriage rights. You can't shoot someone into tolerance. They aren't fighting for the healthcare of our seniors and people living with HIV/AIDS. All of the movements we've fostered, as broad-based as they were/are, have always put the safety and welfare of queer people at the top of our agenda. The Pink Pistols put gun ownership above those rights. They may try to spin it as something else, like "defense," but any person who works full-time preventing the larger, gay/straight community from disarming themselves in the name of "gay rights" is working against our cause. If gay-bashing is your concern, I think we in San Francisco have shown how a community responds. Naomi Margaret's assertion that the Democratic, or left wing's, animosity toward assault weapons hurts our ability to get elected must have ignored all of those people who came out in state after state to vote against same-sex marriage. Should we abandon that cause as well? Some, using her logic, believe we should.

Our community, as diverse as it is, is filled with fetishists of all kinds. We have those into body hair, and we have those not into body hair. We have those into leather and pain. And we have those who have a fetish for firearms. We should put the Pink Pistols in this succession and let them play at a shooting range far from San Francisco. When they want to get serious about LGBT rights, they can lay down their weapons and start fighting for the hearts and minds of those who fear and hate us.

Kevin Weaver
San Francisco

Misquoted

Your article on Eileen Hansen's appointment to the Ethics Commission misquotes me, claiming I called her "a political ally of the board's liberal majority," [*"Hansen named to Ethics Commission," February 10*]. I never uttered those words, in print or otherwise.

My concern about Hansen is that she repeatedly claimed she would be "proactive" on the Ethics Commission, in contrast to her lackadaisical competitor. However, irregularities occurred in her own run for supervisor in 2002. In fact, the Ethics Commission fined her for some of them. She withheld that information at the committee hearing where she said she would be "proactive."

Had I been forced to choose between Hansen and her competitor, I would have voted for her. However, my preference was to send the matter back to committee and open up the application process to more people.

Arthur Evans
San Francisco

Emerging AIDS crisis

When the AIDS epidemic started, very smart people in the city of San Francisco, gay and straight, took immediate action. They shut down the bathhouses and promoted safe sex with vigor. The results were remarkable.

After this success many things have changed. For most, AIDS is no longer a death sentence. With treatment and good genes some folks live seemingly forever. Those who witnessed the horrors of the early epidemic are now dead or too old to get out and swing very much. (Sorry the truth hurts me too.)

Most in the scene today only remember seeing Ryan White on TV and wonder if he is still alive. Perhaps most importantly the drug scene has changed too. Methamphetamine has become cheaper and more popular. More people are smoking it, as that is cheaper and more potent. Smoking it also ruins the

teeth. Those sore gums are wonderful for exchanging bodily fluids. Oral sex just isn't as safe as it used to be when you have no teeth and bloody gums.

All of these factors have helped the disease pick up speed lately. The new superstrains are a product of the idiotic behavior of the above-mentioned groups. What is really sad is when you look at the economics of their behavior. A ton of money was spent fighting AIDS. A group of idiots decided to act stupid and now AIDS has the potential to get real cheap. With these new strains you will die quickly. There will be no lengthy legislative pleas by bleeding hearts for more money for treatment, because now, thanks to some, there is no treatment. Congratulations, you wasted billions of dollars by doing dope and having unsafe sex. You weren't happy sending the leaders of the gay community to Sacramento and Washington, D.C. begging for funding every year.

The smart minds of the gay community are waking up once again as they did at the disease's onset. They are talking about taking direct action against positive people who like to get high and have sex with people without mentioning their deadly secret. The people who do this are murderers, it is crystal clear. Those who behave this way but don't transmit the disease are attempted murderers.

We had a case here in San Francisco where a former health commissioner allegedly knowingly infected his partner. Don't whine to me about needing more money for education, this guy was one of the health educators. What we need is accountability.

Those gay men that knowingly spread the disease now amongst their own community are the worst sort of people. I'm a libertarian at heart. I don't care what adults you have sex with and I don't care how you party as long as you behave and don't want my kids to pay for you after you tear your body up. At the start of AIDS we went to great lengths to protect the diagnosed people's privacy. Now many are getting death sentences because they use their privacy to infect others. The gay community is now coming to the realization that the black community has come to. We kill way more of each other every day than the ole Klan did in the last 20 years combined.

I call on our legislative leaders, particularly Mark Leno, Bevan Dufty, and Tom Ammann to take the lead in this. After a few evil people shivel up in San Quentin after losing their comfy cute lives people will take notice and stop murdering their own so-called community.

John Viletto
San Francisco

Misses Friday

Wayne Friday is our family's cherished friend [*"Wayne Friday retires B.A.R. political column," February 10*]. His column has been honest, always well presented, and influential. He brought special understanding about the LGBT community to the entire community. As an integral part of the district attorney's office and a police commissioner, he also has given greatly to our city and is beloved and respected. He is a person of integrity.

The Marks family thanks you, Wayne. We shall miss your weekly message. We wish you good health and enjoyment in your retirement, but hope that occasionally you will return to us in print. Your views are very important to us.

Carolene Marks
Commissioner on the Status of Women
San Francisco

Waning Friday

I grab your paper on the way home Thursday nights and have read Wayne's political column every Friday morning with a growing bit of skepticism.

Wayne Friday's politics were becoming too Republican-lite for my taste. He was always a cheerleader for Dianne Feinstein and her ilk, while repeating the mantra that Matt Gonzalez and Ross Mirkarimi should abandon the Green Party. Wayne was stubborn that way. Nonetheless, he was a good writer, and my Fridays have been waning since his column disappeared.

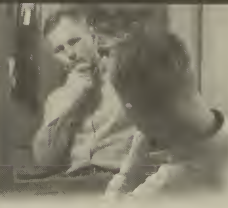
I'm looking forward to the opportunity the B.A.R. has of hiring a new political writer who might be more to the left. A columnist with some veracity and spunk, and one who would have the spine to write the truth about the right-leaning Democrats who are taking this country (and by default the rest of the world) on a disastrous course.

The San Francisco LGBT community should be a harbinger of sanity and hope for the rest of the country. Our message is branded every week in the pages of the B.A.R. With a political columnist in our paper of record who exposes the right-wing Democrats for who they are, we could generate the beginnings of hope and promise for the future.

Robert Meslinsky
San Francisco



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It's payback time

by Gwendolyn Ann Smith

Early in my days within the transgender community, I was taught that it was important to help the next people coming into the community, as a way of "paying back" those who helped us get our start. This was simply the way things were done, in a way of maintaining both our nascent community and our tenuous history.

Today, much of what might have been done then by direct contact is now done via Web sites and other media sources. While I'm certainly not going to fault the importance of having all this information out there — especially given I do most of my work on the Internet — I do find myself wondering if we run the risk of losing something in the process.

I want to talk to those who may be transgender about what might be lost, and caution against this.

It seems as if more and more transgender people are only gaining their knowledge of community through impersonal sources, without having the benefit of direct, interpersonal connections with other transgender people. Without this contact, I wonder if one does not end up shortchanged.

When I first started out, I only had so much knowledge about myself. I knew I was different from

those who were comfortable with their birth gender, but I didn't really know much beyond that.

I did find a few books on transgender topics, but they only went so far. I mean, I could read definitions all day long, but they really didn't get me any closer to understanding myself. The thing I really needed was direct contact.

It was important for me to meet other transgender people of all types and viewpoints in order to see where I fit into this world of ours. Without hearing from a wide and diverse group of people, I would simply not have had a good idea of what I was, or what I might want to explore within myself. If it wasn't for talking with others in the community, I might never have grown beyond where I once was.

I worry that many others today may not be getting a lot of these



Gwendolyn Ann Smith

to wear the attire of our preferred genders in a public setting.

More than these larger items is just an idea of what other transgender people have done in our own communities. What should we know about the streets we live on, and how have others in our numbers shaped these places? So often this is the history that we won't find without reaching out to those others around us.

It is no accident that "community" and "communicate" are such similar words, and I personally feel that one needs to do the latter to have the former. Without passing on our stories, experiences, and accomplishments, we weaken ourselves as individuals and as a

One of the things that makes for a strong community is an understanding of history. Without a sense of where we've come from, it is hard to know where we are now — and without role models we have little to reach for.

experiences that were so useful for me in understanding who I was.

Another item that may lessen without these connections between each other is any form of real oral historical tradition. The history that we impart to each other ends up transient, and lacks much width in either information or age. Indeed, we are often lucky if we, as a community, know of personal or community accomplishments more than a handful of years old.

One of the things that makes for a strong community is an understanding of history. Without a sense of where we've come from, it is hard to know where we are now — and without role models we have little to reach for.

In our past, we have had musical pioneers, professional athletes, writers, computer pioneers, artists, and even the inventor of the dipless ink pen to count among our numbers. Some of us have been bold and flamboyant, and others have been reserved and quiet. Each has managed to be successful individuals in spite of — or perhaps because of — being transgender.

Those within our community who have chosen to be activists have decades of forward motion to their names. Few realize that transgender activism is something that goes back through much of the 20th century, if not before. Because of this, it is often forgotten that it took the blood, sweat, and toil of those who stood up for their rights to gain the ability to marry, to get identity papers changed, or even to have the right

community.

So much of society wants to keep us from reaching out to others. We are expected to remain in our cubicles at work, without our closest circles of friends in society, and otherwise remain practically xenophobic in the world at large.

Being transgender can often highlight this. There isn't an easy protocol for meeting other transgender people out on the street, and some might be ashamed or even angry to be seen as transgender in public — even from one of their own number.

We also create our own divisions between each other within the community. So often transsexuals will not talk with cross-dressers, genderqueers will not talk with transsexuals, and any number of other self-identified subsets of this thing we call "transgender" will actively seek to avoid others within different subsets.

This doesn't foster community, and only seeks to weaken us overall. Frankly, we can often learn more from those who might be different from us than those who are the same. Certainly this can help to create new ideas — and new ideas can lead to growth where there was only stagnation before.

I only ask this: let's keep growing, and "pay back" those who helped us by putting a hand out to the next person down the line. ▼

Gwen Smith is clearly one of those people who will talk to just about anyone. You can find her online at www.gwensmith.com.

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POLITICS

Transgender healthcare equity

by Mark Leno

Editor's note: While the Bay Area Reporter looks for a new political columnist, following the retirement of Wayne Friday, we have invited several LGBT officials and others to write guest columns. This is the first in a series of such columns.

Imagine consistently paying for health insurance—only to find that when you need care, your insurance carrier won't pay for it, leaving you with thousands of dollars of medical bills. Imagine being denied health coverage over and over by insurance carriers, even though you're healthy and active and haven't been sick a day in your life. Imagine the frustration with a medical community that doesn't even recognize your gender and sometimes treats you disrespectfully because it doesn't understand you.

For transgender people, these are the harsh realities faced every day in accessing the basic health care all of us need.

Transgender people, like everyone, share anxiety about national health care issues such as the increasing cost of prescription drugs and insurance. But they're also concerned about issues that are transgender-specific. An independent business owner, for instance, could consistently be denied a health policy simply because he has transitioned from female to male. A full-time employee could be forced to pay out of pocket for medical care because her employer's policy won't cover procedures related to her transition—regardless of whether they're necessary for her health. Transgender people also receive substandard care because of bias or lack of information on the part of health care professionals.

The term "transgender" describes people whose gender identity is different from the gender they were assigned at birth. Gender identity, a characteristic we all possess, is our internal understanding of our own gender. For many transgender people, the difference between their gender identity and their birth-assigned gender creates considerable stress and anxiety that can lead to depression, suicidal feelings, and even increased risk of alcohol and drug dependency. When this is the case, access to appropriate and af-



From left, Assembly members Jackie Goldberg, Paul Koretz, and Mark Leno at a recent hearing in Los Angeles.

fordable health care is central to being able to live a full life.

The term "transition" is used to describe the process some transgender people undergo to bring their outward gender expression into alignment with their gender identity. Insurers in California rarely cover transition. They'll cover breast reconstructive surgery for a woman who has breast cancer, but they won't cover transition when a doctor recommends it for the psychological well-being of the patient.

Costs are often cited as a reason for not covering transition, but evidence shows the costs to be minimal. In 2001, as a San Francisco supervisor, I authored an ordinance that now requires the city to provide expanded health care coverage to transgender employees. After three years of the new plan, it's estimated that the revenues to pay for care exceeded costs by a factor of 25, demonstrating that concerns about spiraling costs were misplaced.

Even if a transgender person pays the full cost of transitioning, insurance providers will often refuse to accept the individual because he or she has already transitioned. When a person's application for an insurance policy is rejected because that person has transitioned, the only reason given is that the person has a "high risk" for health care complications. However, this reason has never been backed up with verifiable data.

Of course, discrimination occurs not only in the provision of insurance coverage but also in the provision of direct health care services. While few justifications exist for insurance discrimination, none exist for discrimination in

services. Fortunately, motivated by community activists and allies, the health care profession is slowly addressing the need for training on these issues. While few medical- or nursing-school programs include substantive information on transgender health care, more and more institutions are doing in-service trainings to begin the long process of transforming themselves into discrimination-free environments.

If transgender people are going to be able to fully access medically necessary services, some action will have to be taken on a larger scale to root out and eliminate these clearly discriminatory policies and practices. Such action will have to be clear and comprehensive in order to overcome the bias that currently exists against transgender people in the health care industry.

To address this problem, my office has held two public hearings in the past few months, one in San Francisco and one in Los Angeles. In attendance were health professionals, state departmental representatives, and members of the community. There is no more powerful testimony than that of an individual who is living daily with the inequity of this discrimination. The courageous transgender women and men who spoke were well informed, passionate, and frustrated with the pace of change. I believe that it is the responsibility of our greater LGBT community to be supportive of the legislative efforts that will assist in ending this added burden of our TG brothers and sisters. ▼

Assemblyman Mark Leno (D) represents San Francisco.

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Medical pot suit filed against CHP

by Liz Highleyman

Americans for Safe Access, a locally-based medical marijuana advocacy group, Monday, February 14 filed suit against the California Highway Patrol, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and state Attorney General Bill Lockyer challenging the CHP's policy of confiscating cannabis from patients and caregivers who possess valid documentation of their status.

ASA filed the suit in the Alameda County Superior Court on behalf of seven plaintiffs who it says are qualified medical marijuana patients. According to the group, all "possessed very small amounts of marijuana, which they

were legally entitled to possess and transport under California law."

California's Compassionate Use Act (Proposition 215), approved by voters in 1996, allows for the possession of cannabis for medical use. In 2003, the state Legislature enacted SB420 to clarify under what conditions marijuana may be cultivated, processed, distributed, and transported.

CHP officers stopped the seven plaintiffs on separate occasions for various traffic violations. In all cases, the officers confiscated the plaintiffs' cannabis after they identified themselves as patients in accordance with state law.

"A number of patients were told by CHP officers that they don't recognize Proposition 215,"

said ASA legal director Kris Hermes. "CHP officers are sworn to uphold the laws of this state, not subvert them."

In the lawsuit, ASA is demanding that the CHP change its current policy, which requires that "all marijuana should be confiscated and booked as evidence," even if a person asserts their right to possess cannabis under the Compassionate Use Act. The group has requested a jury trial. In several cases over the past few years, juries have proven reluctant to uphold charges against medical cannabis patients and caregivers.

"Confiscation from legal patients is a civil rights violation," said Mary Jane Winters, a registered nurse who uses marijuana to

next page ►

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Are civil unions a dead end?

by Dale Carpenter

Are civil unions, as a political compromise, harmful to the cause of gay marriage? This is a question likely to confront many gay rights activists in the coming years as a few states move toward legally recognizing gay relationships.

Just this past fall, Connecticut seemed poised to enact a civil unions law giving gay couples all of the protections, benefits, and responsibilities of marriage under state law. But in January the state gay-marriage advocacy group, Love Makes a Family, began lobbying legislators to oppose the bill. Now legislators are uncertain whether it can pass. Since a gay-marriage bill has no chance of passing this session, the result is that gay couples may get nothing in the short-term.

On its Web site and in public statements, the Connecticut group has offered two plausible reasons for its all-or-nothing strategy. The first is that civil unions are not a stepping stone to marriage but a dead end. "Make no mistake, if we fight for civil unions, the marriage conversation will end just as it has in Vermont," said the group's president, Anne Stanback, in a statement posted

on the organization's Web site. Stanback notes that Vermont "is the only place where we have an example of what civil union leads to — and it leads to civil union."

The dead-end argument is troubling. It's true that Vermont has made no progress toward gay marriage since its legislature created civil unions in 2000. Though a gay-marriage bill has been filed, it is going nowhere. Even gay advocates in the state seem content to stand pat.

But Vermont is a special case. The fight over civil unions there was a traumatic and divisive one, manifested in unusually bitter election campaigns, angry letters to the editor, and nasty billboards. That should

be no surprise: Vermont did not come to the issue incrementally or democratically. Instead, the state Supreme Court ordered the legislature to recognize gay unions and to do so quickly. The people had no opportunity to adjust themselves gradually to the idea, or to have their voices truly heard. The resulting wounds are deep, and will take long to heal.

Civil unions adopted legislatively in Connecticut, and elsewhere, would write a different and much better story. They would be adopted by a legislature acting on its own, not under court order. There is no reason to believe a civil union law would have the politically paralyzing effect it has had in Vermont. Instead, adopting civil unions will add a strong weapon to the arsenal of arguments for gay marriage: "We've got the legal benefits, now why not marriage?"

The path of progress for the legislative recognition of gay relationships has been an incremental one, with no single step being a dead end. That has been true in California, where largely symbolic domestic partnerships first created five years ago have grown gradually into something approaching full marriage. It has also been true in foreign countries taking a legislative path, like Sweden and Norway, which enacted limited legal benefits for same-sex couples before moving to comprehensive registered partnerships. It was true in the Netherlands, which implemented domestic partnerships before moving to full marriage. There is little reason to believe that a democratic conversation about the rights

of gay couples, once begun, will end with civil unions.

The second argument against civil unions as an intermediate step to marriage is that civil unions send the unacceptable message that gays are second-class citizens. Civil unions, said Stanback, are "a firm message that we are less deserving of dignity, respect, and rights than other citizens and taxpayers." Marriage, by contrast, "is a universally respected cultural, legal, and social institution," she noted. "Very, very few opposite-sex couples would trade their marriage for something called a civil union."

All of that is true and counsels against being satisfied, in the end, with anything short of marriage. But it is not an argument for an all-or-nothing strategy. While second-class citizenship (civil unions) is worse than first-class citizenship (marriage), it is far preferable to third-class citizenship (nothing), at least if we think that attaining second-class status will actually move us forward in the battle for first-class status.

A related and more serious concern is that creating alternative statuses like civil unions may entrench public attitudes hostile to gay marriage, leading to the feared dead end. In a forthcoming book, University of Minnesota sociology professor Kathleen Hull notes the danger that civil unions might "further normalize the treatment of gays and lesbians as a separate class of citizens." If civil unions could be expected to have this effect, they should be resisted while we wait for marriage.

The risk of entrenching gays' separate status through civil unions or other marriage-lite proposals, preventing all further progress, is real but probably not very large. The experience of California and of other countries, noted above, is against it. Gay couples and their families, having tasted legal legitimacy for the first time, are unlikely to be satisfied for long with anything less than full equality. Heterosexuals, having lived through the nonevent of recognizing gay relationships by something short of marriage, will begin to wonder what the fuss was about.

Compromise is the rule of politics. In what promises to be a decades-long struggle for gay marriage, a struggle still in its infancy, we'd do well to remember that. Civil unions are not where we want to be, but they're a lot better than where we are. ▼

Medical pot

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alleviate chronic back pain, and who was stopped by the CHP for speeding last November. "They had no reason to believe that I was not in compliance with California law."

Medical marijuana week


In related news, February 12-19 is the annual Medical Marijuana Week, which features several events to educate people about medical cannabis and the need for law reform.

Events during the remainder of the week include a marijuana law forum on Saturday, February 19, co-sponsored by the Oakland Civil Liberties Alliance, the California chapter of the National Or-

ganization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, and the Drug Policy Alliance. The event will take place at the Oakland YWCA, 1515 Webster Street, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Registration is \$20 and includes a box lunch.

The same day, a Medical Marijuana Health Fair will be held at 350 Divisadero Street in San Francisco from 7 to 10 p.m. The fair will feature educational demonstrations of a variety of medical cannabis products, videos, and a discussion of the state of the medical marijuana movement. ▼

For more information about the CHP lawsuit or Medical Marijuana Week events, visit ASA's Web site at www.safeaccessnow.org.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Hard as a rock

by Jane Warner

Church and Market, February 10, 7:04 p.m.: A man pushing his shopping cart on Church Street accidentally bumped into a man who was walking in the opposite direction.

"Excuse me," he stated and continued walking away. The passerby, however, became angry.

"Fuck you," the passerby screamed, and picked up a nearby brick, hurling it at the man.

Seeing the brick fly toward him, the man ducked out of the way and kept pushing his cart down the sidewalk. As he walked away, he suddenly felt a sharp blow to the back of the head which knocked him unconscious. The man woke up to see paramedics tending to him, and a brick on the ground next to him.

The suspect, who was described as African American, 16-18 years old, 6 feet 3 inches, 180

pounds, was last seen walking eastbound on Market Street.

Alphabet soup

20th and Dolores, February 10, 1:26 a.m.: While driving in his car, a man witnessed another car hit a parked vehicle and keep going. The man followed the hit and run suspect, who appeared to be intoxicated. As they approached Church Street, the alleged drunk pulled into a driveway and the witness pulled in behind, blocking him in while he talked to the police dispatcher on his cell phone.

Officers soon arrived and pulled the drunk driver out of the vehicle.

"I'm sorry," the man told one of the officers, "I fucked up."

Smelling a strong odor of alcohol emitting from his breath, the officer asked the suspect to recite the alphabet.

"A, B, C," the suspect stated. "K, M, L."

The 37-year-old man was

placed under arrest and transported to Mission Station where he was booked for driving under the influence and fleeing the scene of an accident.

Avid reader

Harvey Milk Library, February 12, 4:20 p.m.: A man became very angry after being told he couldn't retrieve a friend's library card out of the lost and found.

"Fuck you, you bitch," he screamed at the librarian, "you will give me this card."

The suspect pounded his fist on the counter. Fearing for the safety of others in the library, the librarian motioned to a staff member to call 911.

Seeing this, the suspect left the library, kicking the glass front door on his way out, shattering it. Police responded and searched the area for the suspect - described as a white male, 30 years old, 5 feet 6 inches, with a thin build, curly blond hair, and wearing a charcoal gray sweatshirt - but they could not find him.

Bone to pick

2100 block of Market, February 9, 3:48 p.m.: While standing on the outboard platform waiting for the M train and listening to music on his headphones, a man was approached by three other men, one of whom had his hands outstretched and was saying something.

Taking off his earphones to hear better, the man asked, "What did you say?"

Without answering, the suspect punched him in the face with a closed fist, causing him to fall to the ground. The two other suspects began to punch and kick him and then all three men ran up the stairs and out of the Muni underground in an unknown direction.

The victim, who received only minor injuries, told responding police that he recognized one of the suspects as the brother of a woman who had filed a police report against him for sexually assaulting her.

Police searched the area for the suspects, described as African American in their late teens, but could not find them. ▼



Crime & Punishment

Alan Keyes's daughter comes out

by Bob Roehr

Maya Marcel-Keyes made her debut as a gay activist at a rally in Annapolis, Maryland on Valentine's Day. Defining herself as a "liberal queer," the 19-year-old daughter of right-wing commentator and former presidential candidate Alan Keyes urged support for young gays and lesbians deserted by their families.

Alan Keyes is also the former Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate in Maryland, and most recently, ran a long shot for the U.S. Senate in Illinois, where Democrat Barack Obama soundly beat him.

Maya Keyes delayed starting college at Brown University to help her father's last campaign in Illinois, despite the fact that she disagrees with him "on almost everything" political. She periodically wrote of being a lesbian on her blog, and news of that circulated on the Internet but did not enter the campaign.

During that campaign Alan Keyes called homosexuality "selfish hedonism" and linked that description to Mary Cheney, daughter of Vice President Dick Cheney.

Maya said her parents "were not too pleased" to learn that she is a lesbian. "As long as I was quiet about being gay or my politics, we got along," she told the *Washington Post*.

But her nascent political activism recently led her parents to break all ties with their young daughter. She was fired from a job with her dad's political organization, told to leave his apartment where she was living, and told not to expect any financial support for college.

Alan Keyes issued a statement that read in full: "My daughter is an adult, and she is responsible for her own actions. What she chooses to do has nothing to do with my work or political activities."

As Maya wrote on her blog: "Most parents would be thrilled to have a child who doesn't smoke,



Newly out Maya Marcel-Keyes

have sex, do drugs, hardly drinks ... does well in school, gets good grades, gets into the Ivy League ... goes regularly to church, spends free time mentoring kids."

The younger Keyes was fortunate that the Point Foundation came to her aid with a scholarship for college. The national organization supports gay and lesbian youth that have been abandoned by their biological families. Limited resources allow the foundation to meet only a small fraction of the requests for assistance that it receives.

At the Annapolis rally, Maya spoke movingly of a teenage friend who had been thrown out on the street when his parents found out he was gay. He died last week.

"Like me, he grew up in a conservative household ... told constantly how there is something wrong, unnatural, immoral because of who they are," she said. "He'd been out there two years and had gotten nothing. And the worst part is, he isn't the only one."

The rally urged Maryland lawmakers to reject a proposed constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. "When you change the constitution, you don't erase our families," said David Furmansky, executive director of Equality Maryland, which sponsored the rally. ▼

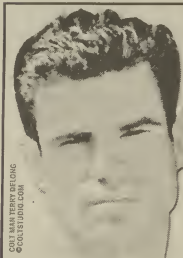
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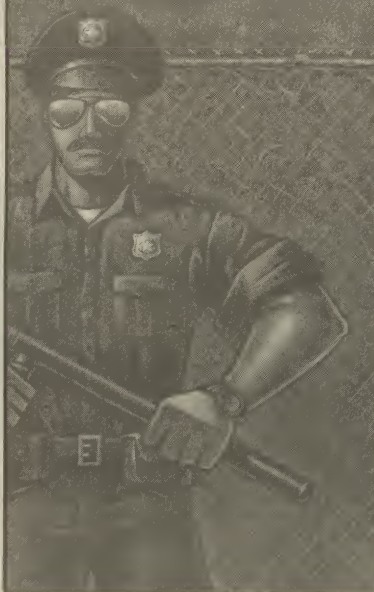


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Students protest military at career fair

by Kevin Davis

The U.S. military, which discharges gays for coming out, tried recruiting at a college career fair in San Francisco Saturday, February 12.

The Coalition of Queer Law Student Associations protested against organizers of the Hastings Law School Public Interest-Public Sector Legal Career Fair for allowing Marine and National Guard recruiters to participate in the event.

Holding "Give a pink slip to bigotry" placards, LGBT law students from Hastings; Santa Clara University; the University of San Francisco; Golden Gate University; the University of California, Berkeley; and New College asked the career services office to "stand up for academic freedom." They called for law schools to resist being "strong-armed into sacrificing deeply held principles — cen-

tral to our legal community," despite a recent federal court decision that ruled unconstitutional the Solomon Amendment, a 1993 federal statute threatening universities with federal grant and contract loss for excluding campus military recruiters.

Last November the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia, in *FAIR v. Rumsfeld*, declared the Solomon Amendment unconstitutional because it likely violated the First Amendment rights of eight law schools and 18 law school faculties — including Golden Gate and USF faculty — who sought preliminary injunctive relief.

On January 20, the court stayed its ruling until the U.S. Supreme Court either denies review or affirms the ruling.

Two weeks ago, the House of Representatives voted to urge President Bush to appeal the November court ruling and two days later the Bush administration announced it would appeal the deci-

sion to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"It's ironic having the military here," said David Tsai, a Santa Clara University law school student who attended Saturday's protest. He called their presence "unjust and immoral."

"Basically, it's allowing a decision that's the opposite of what law school is about," Tsai added.

"It's a decision not really in the hands of the people organizing," said David Annicchiarico, president of both the 30-member OUTLAW and the National Lawyers Guild chapter at Hastings.

Pinning down the direct source of the directive allowing military recruiters on campus proved illusive. For Hastings general counsel Elise Traynum, federal law simply creates a specific exemption for military recruiters.

With the Solomon Amendment's 1993 passage, the school's board of directors decided to allow military recruiters, concluding that "because military practices are not unlawful under current judicial interpretation of discrimination, there is no proper legal basis for excluding them from campus," said Traynum.

When presented with the students' contention that the school could risk resisting government coercion, she replied, "No comment."

UC Regents liaison Trey Davis believes the Board of Regents, which ensures that the University of California (of which Hastings is an independent but legal part of) complies with federal policy, has not voted on the Solomon issue. Individual campuses or specific departments deal with campus recruiting legality, said Davis, who requested that he not be quoted.

The students maintain the government coerces rather than forces schools to accept military recruiters and that the schools can always resist.

"We feel they should take the moral high ground and go out on a limb in violating the policy, not selling our civil rights," said Annicchiarico. "It violates their entire antidiscrimination policy. It's extortion, that's what it is."

"We believe the threat of the federal government to kill funding is not credible," said Golden Gate University law student David Waggoner.

So far the military has not pulled funding from any school for banning its recruiters.

"Even if they do lose funding they should not allow them on principle," said Waggoner, the Na-



Meredith Wood, a Golden Gate University law student, joins other activists from the Coalition of Queer Law Student Associations in a protest against the presence of military recruiters at Hastings College of Law.

tional Lawyers Guild student vice president who interned at the Positive Resource Center. "Harvard and Yale [which banned them] get tons of money."

"It's a matter of taking a stand before the possibility of retaliation," said Mickey Branca, a member of USF's Pride Law.

At the career fair, job applicants and non-military employment recruiters sported rainbow nametag stickers in solidarity with LGBT students.

Stanford, which receives hundreds of millions of federal science dollars, devised a solution to side step the military's binding constraint, thus not violating the school's nondiscrimination policy. The school will provide military recruiters space under the condition that sufficient students show interest.

"But, for God knows what reason, students aren't terribly interested in JAG [judge advocate general] careers," Stanford OUTLAW Co-President Daniel Shih said sarcastically.

Alameda Recruiting Station Marine Captain Eric Montalvo, offering applicants free calculators and key chains, said his co-workers' sexual orientation never comes up in conversation.

"We keep things on a professional level," said Montalvo. "I'm involved in the task at hand so discussion of an individual's preference does not come up in the workplace."

But Steve Ralls, spokesman for the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, calls that assertion

"blatantly untrue."

"Heterosexuals talk about orientation every day on the job, what they did over the weekend, who their families are," said Ralls. "Gay and lesbian service members can't talk about that so they are suspected — they become the object of rumor and ridicule."

Shih said careers involve developing personal connections.

"It's about reciprocity," said Shih. "If you can't open up and contribute to the same extent as others, if you're lying or changing genders in conversation, that's not a way to build real trusting relationships."

Marine Captain Judge Advocate A.K. Szymanski discussed a colonel, now retired "and living with her girlfriend."

"From what I heard, supposedly people knew," said Szymanski, a former USF student, cryptically calling her "a full bird colonel military judge, [with] a phenomenal career I could only hope to have."

"We can't take action on second-hand knowledge, only if it affects good order and discipline," added Szymanski.

But Ralls believes that discretion is not the key to job security.

"She is probably unaware of the sacrifices that [the colonel] made, having to lie to have a career like hers," said Ralls.

Ralls said that second-hand knowledge is often the basis for initiating an investigation.

"The reality of the situation is that in case after case they get discharged with no credible evidence, only hearsay," said Ralls. ▼

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'Don't Ask' discharges down – again

by Bob Roehr

The number of service members discharged from the military under the antigay policy known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" continued to decline in fiscal year 2004, which ended last September 30. In a February 11 statement, the Pentagon said discharges totaled 653.

Discharges peaked at 1,227 during fiscal year 2001, the transition from the Clinton to the Bush administrations, and have declined every year since then to about half the peak number. The discharges are at their lowest level since the antigay policy went into effect in 1994.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, while working to overturn the ban, also has pushed hard for training and fair implementation of the regulations as they are currently written. They credit the Pentagon for having made progress on these counts over the last four years.

It is difficult to tell, however, how much of the drop in discharges is attributable to changing attitudes and practices within the military and how much of it is because of the manpower needs of the services tied to the conflict in Iraq.

Historically, antigay administrative actions have declined during wartime only to reemerge with the end of hostilities and a lesser demand on available personnel. That pattern was seen in World War II, Vietnam, and the first Gulf

war.

"The continued drop in 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' discharges at a time of war clearly shows that it is a law we don't need," said Kathi Westcott, an attorney with SLDN. "These numbers clearly show that military commanders value good service members during a time of war, whether the service members are gay or straight."

The numbers once again lay to rest the contention that allowing gays to serve in the military is a threat to good order and discipline and unit cohesion. Charles Moskos, a sociologist who has studied the issue intensely, told the *Washington Post* that may be

part of the explanation. Most of the discharges under DADT come from soldiers declaring their sexual orientation; fewer than 20 percent are the result of investigations or actual sexual activity.

It may be that in the current patriotic climate, fewer individual soldiers – heterosexual as well as homosexual – are claiming to be gay as their ticket out of the military. It also may be that fewer commanders are willing to accept such declarations as grounds for discharge, or that discharges are occurring under other provisions of the regulations.

"These falling numbers point to an erratically enforced law that

needs to go," said David Smith, vice president for policy and strategy at the Human Rights Campaign.

SLDN's Westcott concurred. "Who can support a law that is irrelevant, unnecessary, and harmful? The fact is that gay and lesbian service members don't harm unit cohesion, and the continuing decline in discharge numbers clearly illustrates this fact."

The military has continued to discharge personnel with language and technical skills that are in short supply, which further undermines the contention that DADT is a necessary or sound policy. ▼



SLDN attorney Kathi Westcott

News in brief

◀ page 4

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Lecture to honor Mary Dunlap

A lecture series taking place next week in Berkeley will honor the late Mary Dunlap, a pioneering attorney who was a ceaseless advocate for women, LGBTQ people, people of color, people with HIV/AIDS, immigrants, and disabled people. Dunlap was the former head of the San Francisco Office of Citizen Complaints, a police watchdog agency, and famously argued before the U.S. Supreme Court against the U.S. Olympic

Committee on behalf of the Gay Olympics (now Gay Games). Dunlap, 54, died January 17, 2003 after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Maureen Mason, Dunlap's partner, helped organize the "Mary C. Dunlap Lecture on Sex, Gender, and Social Justice." The first in a planned annual event is being presented by the Boalt Center for Social Justice. This year's topic is "Same-Sex Marriage and Beyond: What Now?" and takes place Thursday, February 24 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at Booth Auditorium at Boalt Hall on the University of California, Berkeley campus. Speakers are to include Evan Wolfson, founder and director of Freedom to Marry and the author of *Why Marriage Matters* and Patsy Currah, professor of political science at Brooklyn College CUNY and a co-founder of the

Transgender Law and Policy Institute. The moderator will be Rhonda Copelon, director of the International Women's Human Rights Clinic at CUNY School of Law and the founder of the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice.

Directions and updates (including information on shuttles from the downtown Berkeley BART station) can be found at www.marycdunlap.org.

Santa Cruz Pride entertainment sought

Organizers of Santa Cruz's annual LGBT Pride event have announced they are seeking entertainers who'd like to perform at the celebration, slated for Sunday, June 5. The Diversity Center produces the Pride festivities, and while it cannot offer monetary compensation, entertainers can

sell CDs or other merchandise and get exposure to an enthusiastic and appreciative crowd.

Established and up and coming musicians, comedians, dancers, theatrical acts, and other queer-positive entertainers are encouraged to share their talents. Those interested should submit a video or audio demo, a brief biography, and support material (press clippings, photos, etc.), technical and staging information, and contact information. Materials submitted become the property of Santa Cruz Pride and cannot be returned, and should be sent to Stage, c/o The Diversity Center, P.O. Box 8280, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-8280. Submissions should be postmarked by March 19.

For more information, call (831) 427-4009 or e-mail entertainment@santacruzpride.org. ▼

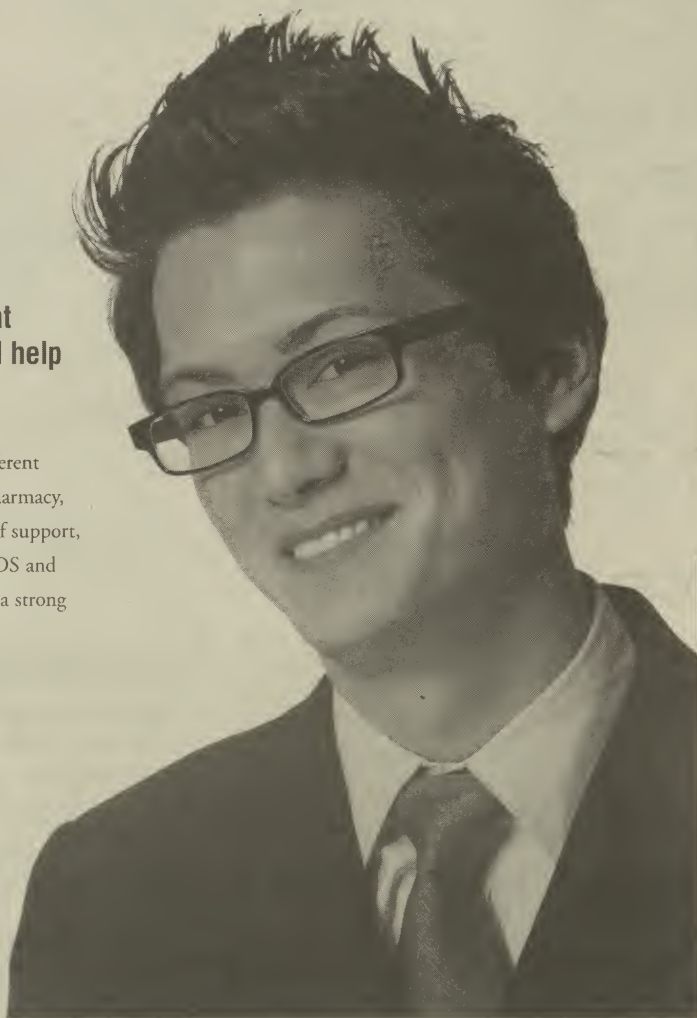
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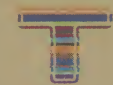
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Genderqueer conference tackles identity, discourse

by Zak Szymanski

Can activists, artists, and academics find a common ground to create social change despite operating with differing vocabularies and tactics?

On Saturday, February 12, a panel at the University of California, Santa Barbara addressed this question as part of the GenderQueer/QueerGenders conference organized by graduate students. The panel, entitled, "Politics, Art, and Performance" featured prominent academic and lesbian writer Judith "Jack" Halberstam; San Francisco-based intersex activist and writer/performer Thea Hillman; and New York-based antiwar activist and transgender performer Imani Henry.

The panel addressed the fact that different populations with the same goals often seem contradictory to one another, particularly in the LGBTQI arena, where complex identities and experiences make it nearly impossible for there to be a universal narrative.

"It can be difficult to talk across categories, even though we desperately want to talk to each other," noted Halberstam, who described activists as needing "firm categories" in order to establish visibility and recognition, while artists and academics often play with those categories and question what is real.

In the transgender and genderqueer communities, she said, a personal reality is often at odds with a political one, particularly as emerging gender identities often challenge the very reality upon which civil rights are granted. Many younger transgenders, for instance, have adopted a social-construct view of gender, or refuse to be labeled as either "male" or "female," yet gender identity protections are often dependent upon people identifying consistently along binary lines.

"Transgender narratives," she said, "can come in the form of abstraction."

Such variances within the same communities prove difficult for its members, too, who may find themselves offending each other as they search for their own political voices.

Hillman, whose activism draws attention to unnecessary medical interventions in the lives of intersex people, said part of her work is realizing how her own narrative may be interpreted to negate the



From left, panelists Judith "Jack" Halberstam, Imani Henry, and Thea Hillman at the genderqueer conference.

narratives of transgenders and transsexuals.

Describing non-consensual genital surgeries as "violence," and "false," for instance, speaks to the "lengths to which society will go to make someone 'normal,'" she said, and her task is to make clear that it is the nature of the experience and motivations behind the surgeries which taint such interventions, rather than surgery in and of itself.

"I came out as 'I' in a TG/TS community that's been talking about these things longer than I have, and I've made a lot of mistakes," she said.

Henry emphasized the importance of language and identity when he explained that as an artist, his work was always political. In these current political times, he said, language can make all the difference.

"I put the identify of 'activist' first, because it informs what I do," he said. "It is so much more important in this period of time to be identified as an activist."

Similarly, being openly transgender in antiracist, antiwar circles has meant that his own LGBTQI education has reached communities in an authentic way. The transgender movement, he said, was the first to respond to the "Rainbow Flags for Mumia" effort, a queer coalition dedicated to seeking justice for Pennsylvania death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal. As a result of queer involvement in that movement, he noted, pieces of original ACT UP

chants can now be heard regularly at Mumia demonstrations.

Both Henry and Halberstam also advocated taking back words like "liberation" and "freedom" that have been used by the Bush administration to justify war and discrimination.

Before September 11, 2001, said Henry, much of that vocabulary belonged to progressive activists, who were organizing in mass demonstrations against globalization and making gains against the death penalty.

"Pre-9/11 we were on the offensive," he said. "It was happening. We had them on the run."

Other panels and workshops at the GenderQueer/QueerGenders conference addressed ideas such as queer femininities, heterosexual queers, and race, class, and privilege. Several Bay Area activists, performers, and academics were featured, including Bryan Burgess and Jody Marksamer from People in Search of Safe Restrooms; LGBT historian Susan Stryker, Ph.D.; dancer Sean Dorsey; activist-performer Yosenio Lewis; and the dance troupe Burlesque-Esque.

The conference aimed to provide a forum, according to organizers, "for people who have been thinking about queerness and gender from different places and different means." A priority of the gathering was to "reflect the diversity and complexity of gender expressions and the meanings gender has in different racial and cultural locations." ▼

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NYC AIDS case

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Additional testing of the New York patient's virus, as well as his HIV collected from some of his sexual partners, is currently under way. Much of the testing is being done at the South San Francisco headquarters of ViroLogic, a biotechnology company that produces assays to measure drug resistance and viral fitness.

Transmission of drug-resistant HIV is not a new phenomenon, and it is well known that due to genetics and other factors, HIV disease progresses at varying rates in different individuals. The New York case raises concern because it is the first public report of HIV that is both resistant to three major classes of antiretroviral medications — nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors, non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors, and protease inhibitors — and is dual-tropic, meaning it can use two different types of receptors to enter human cells.

"It is an unusual combination of three-class resistant and dual-tropic HIV, which is linked to worse prognosis," said Dr. Rick Hecht, associate professor of medicine at the University of California at San Francisco. "People with advanced HIV disease get viruses that look like this. What's new is seeing newly transmitted virus with both characteristics."

Hecht was the first to report transmission of drug-resistant HIV at the International AIDS Conference in Geneva in 1998. He heads the Options Project at UCSF, which has been conducting surveillance of drug resistance in recently infected individuals in San Francisco since 1996.

During 2003, the last full year for which data are available, about 10 percent of newly infected individuals had HIV that was resistant to any one class of drugs, usually NRTIs, Hecht told the B.A.R. Researchers detected no cases of newly transmitted HIV resistant to three drug classes in 2003, and only two such cases out of about 176 people tested since surveillance began. Transmission of dual-tropic HIV is also uncommon, he said, "maybe in the range of a few percent."

So far, no cases of three-class-resistant, dual-tropic HIV similar to the New York case have been reported in San Francisco. An unidentified San Diego man may be infected with the same drug-resistant strain, the *San Diego Union-Tribune* reported Tuesday. However, it is not known whether the strains are an exact match, according to Dr. David Ho, director of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center in Manhattan.

Project Inform's Martin Delaney

"This is a clear reminder that people can become infected with very bad variants of HIV," Hecht said. "But we should be careful not to imply this is common. I don't think that's going to be true."

Some local experts criticized New York City public health officials and researchers from the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center for raising the alarm with so little conclusive information. Nevertheless, many took the opportunity to re-emphasize the importance of HIV prevention.

"Project Inform believes that the current reports may be unnecessarily alarming to the public," Martin Delaney, founding director, said in a prepared statement. "We believe that it is premature to conclude that this event represents evidence of a 'superbug' or a particularly virulent strain of HIV, or that the patient is 'untreatable' or will suffer a particularly rapid disease progression."

"It's inappropriate to draw sweeping conclusions based on a single case," Fred Dillon, policy and communications director at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, told the B.A.R. But the New York case "reminds us all that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is an ongoing serious public health crisis, and we need to keep up our guard."

"They came out to the media without having nailed this down, and that's really irresponsible," concurred Jeff Sheehy, Mayor Gavin Newsom's HIV/AIDS adviser, noting that premature pronouncements about HIV eradication by Ho in 1996 "led the community to let down its guard." But, he added, "there is a solid reason to remind people that they could become infected with a resistant strain of HIV and that they could rapidly progress to AIDS. HIV can still be a very deadly disease. You can get sick very quickly, and it can be difficult to treat."

In making its announcement last Friday, the New York City Department of Health and Mental

Hygiene asked medical providers to test all patients newly diagnosed with HIV infection for drug-resistant virus.

According to Dr. Jeffrey Klausner, director of STD Prevention and Control Services at the San Francisco Department of Public Health, the city is not calling for any policy changes at this time, although he noted that many experts recommend testing newly diagnosed individuals for drug-resistant HIV even if they are not yet considering treatment.

Researchers at City Clinic, where Klausner is medical director, have routinely monitored all newly identified HIV cases for drug resistance since the fall of 2003. Out of a total of about 135 individuals tested, one in eight have shown evidence of any drug resistance, and a third of these (or about 4 percent overall) have had HIV that is resistant to two drug classes, he told the B.A.R. However, the clinic has not seen any cases of virus resistant to three drug classes.

Klausner expressed some uncertainty about whether the New York case is truly indicative of a rapidly progressing strain of HIV. "During acute infection, a person's CD4 count will often go down substantially. Without monitoring over time, we cannot be sure whether this is a case of rapid progression or not." However, he added, "We know that crystal methamphetamine impairs the immune system, particularly CD8 cells, which are important in controlling the initial response to HIV."

Warning on crystal

Stop AIDS' Riggs also sounded the alarm about crystal meth and its connection to unprotected sex. "It's clear that crystal is not only fueling new HIV infections, but is also creating situations where new strains of HIV and rare STDs have the opportunity to emerge in our community," he said, referring to recent reports of several cases of lymphogranuloma venereum, a sexually transmitted disease related to chlamydia, in San Francisco, New York City, and Atlanta.

According to Stop AIDS, one-third of new HIV infections in San Francisco are seen among men who have used speed within the past six months, and the organization's recent survey of some 10,000 gay and bisexual men found that at least one in five reported using speed within this time frame.

"The key take-home message is that HIV continues to be sexually transmitted and is associated with crystal methamphetamine," Klausner concluded. "People need to be aware and do the best they can to practice safer sex." ▼

Condoms

◀ page 4

strength threshold of 25 liters."

Durex's "Extra Sensitive Lubricated Latex" and "Permax Lubricated" scored highest. Durex won praise from AIDS activists last year when it voluntarily stopped production of condoms laced with the spermicide nonoxonyl-9. N-9 has been shown to increase the risk of HIV transmission because it strips away the protective epithelial cells in the rectum and vagina. Although effective when used in spermicidal creams and jellies, there is no evidence that it provides any additional contraceptive benefit when added to condoms.

Consumer Reports addressed the N-9 issue in its article: "There's no reason to choose spermicidal con-

doms over other kinds. They have no additional benefit in preventing pregnancy, have a shorter shelf life, and may cause urinary-tract infections in young women. Nonoxonyl-9, a widely used spermicide, came under scrutiny in 2001 when a report from the World Health Organization warned that if used frequently, it may cause vaginal irritation and might increase the risk of contracting HIV."

"Though the amount of nonoxonyl-9 on a spermicide-lubricated condom is smaller compared with the doses studied in the report, some condom makers, including Durex, have dropped models lubricated with nonoxonyl-9. Others, including Trojan and LifeStyles, say they will keep selling them. A LifeStyles spokesman said the company is working with the Food and Drug Administration on the issue of nonoxonyl-9."

In the fall of 2002, all three major manufacturers still making lubricants with N-9 voluntarily discontinued making the product shortly after a series of critical articles in the *Bay Area Reporter*. Condom makers have been far more reluctant to remove N-9 from condoms. Activists say that's because they are putting profits ahead of the health of their customers. Condom makers insist that N-9 laced condoms provide users with an additional contraceptive benefit in case the condom breaks, but when pressed, the condom makers could provide no evidence of that claim.

The complete condom study can be found on Consumer Reports' Web site: www.ConsumerReports.org. More information on efforts to remove N-9 from condoms can be found on the Web site: www.StopN9Condoms.com. ▼

NY health officials allude to possible new HIV strain

by Bob Roehr

AIDS frenzy engulfed New York City when health officials and leading researchers announced at a February 11 news conference that they had identified a single patient infected with multiple drug resistant HIV that had rapidly progressed to full blown AIDS over what was believed to be only a few months.

The *New York Times* fanned the flames with ominous headlines in blanket coverage of three articles the next day, and a drumbeat of stories over the ensuing days. It raised the specter of a reemerging epidemic that mirrored the early days when HIV was not treatable.

Behind this example of science by press conference, not peer review, were amazingly few clearly established facts, a plethora of unanswered questions, and rampant speculation.

New York City Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas R. Frieden said a gay man in his mid-40s was diagnosed in December 2004 with a strain of HIV that is resistant to drugs in all three classes of therapy that make up most antiretroviral regimens. His T-cells fell rapidly and he was diagnosed with AIDS in January.

The man acknowledged using crystal methamphetamine and to having unprotected receptive anal sex with hundreds of partners, often while taking meth, health officials reported. He had previously tested negative for HIV and officials believe that he became infected some time last October.

"This is a wake-up call," Frieden said. "First, it's a wake-up call to men who have sex with men, particularly those who may use crystal methamphetamine."

AIDS researcher Dr. David Ho called the combination of resistant virus and rapid progression "a scary phenomenon."

The health department issued an alert to physicians to test all newly diagnosed HIV patients for drug resistance and to choose the therapeutic regimen accordingly. It is a practice that many experienced HIV doctors have been following for years.

Not everyone jumped on the hysteria bandwagon. "My guess is that this is much ado about nothing," said researcher Robert Gallo, who was one of the first to isolate and identify HIV. "Though it's prudent to follow, I don't think it's necessary to issue a warning or



Dr. David Ho

alert the press."

"There is no reason for a public national release of information prior to the careful analysis of what actually is going on," said Boston AIDS advocate David Scondras.

In light of widely ballyhooed fears that an "epidemic" of syphilis among gay men might lead to a resurgence of new HIV infections — which proved false when the numbers of new HIV diagnoses in San Francisco dropped last year — "the CDC et al have no credibility and our continually traumatized community will opt for skepticism over belief even when a real threat occurs," Scondras said.

"The history of the AIDS epidemic has taught us that misinformation spreads more quickly than the virus itself," said Julie David, executive director of the New York-based Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project.

"We urge all public and community health providers and the media to clarify the facts of this case, and to direct resources toward a comprehensive HIV prevention effort that confronts, rather than encourages, stigmatization of people at risk of, or living with HIV," David said.

Untreated HIV takes about a decade to advance from initial infection to an AIDS diagnosis in most individuals. But the overall course of disease progression is a bell curve; at one end is a small group of people known as slow progressors and at the other is a small group of rapid progressors.

The scientific literature has many examples of individuals who have died within about six months of becoming infected with HIV.

Researchers have identified genetic differences as an explanation

for some of these differences in the course of disease. Other contributing factors include coinfection with other diseases and substance abuse that may damage the immune system.

The emergence of drug resistance is an issue with every infectious disease, which increases with time. Susan Little, a researcher at the University of California San Diego, leads an ongoing effort to monitor the transmission of drug resistant HIV in the U.S. She has found that rates vary between 5 and 20 percent, depending on the city.

Resistance to a single class of drug is most common. But resistance to all three classes of anti-HIV drugs has been seen before and those numbers are creeping upward.

Frieden defended his decision to call the news conference last week, telling the *Times* that he was not announcing a scientific discovery but a public health phenomenon that required intervention.

"I don't know whether this is of tremendous scientific importance," he told the newspaper, "but I do know that from a public health standpoint it is of great concern and it has immediate implications for what the community does and what doctors do and what we do." ▼

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Newsom

◀ page 1

ditionally been a union between a man and a woman that allowing gays and lesbians to marry would erode the institution of marriage.

"Don't believe these folks who talk about tradition. They sit there and defend bigotry and prejudice because they say it's tradition," said Newsom. "Tradition said blacks could not become citizens. Tradition is not always right. Do not stand behind tradition-elected officials of any stripe."

As for President Bush, who again is pushing for the passage of a federal marriage amendment, Newsom had one message: "Shame on you, President Bush."

"Don't listen to the president of the United States. Shame on you, George Bush," said the mayor.

Before his speech, Newsom met with three couples who wed last year and was asked about both the president's and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's efforts to ban gay marriage. As for Bloomberg, who despite his personal support for the issue is appealing a lower court decision in favor of gay marriage, Newsom said his decision is "just wrong."

"I hope he sees the light and the opportunity he has to make a real contribution. He's got a critical role to play if he chooses to," said Newsom.

On the president's backing of the FMA, Newsom questioned his sincerity, adding he thought it an "embarrassment" for Bush to push for the amendment when it is clear there are not enough votes in Congress to pass it.

"To cynically push for it again in his State of the Union speech, it is sad. You don't need to do that," he said. "I never thought his heart was behind it. He is doing it for the wrong reasons. It is obvious."

Attacked by some within his own party who contend his decision last year led to the Democrats' defeat in November, Newsom, during his speech, reiterated that he is not worried about his own political future.

"I don't care what happens to me. I care about what happens to you. I care about what happens to this country. I care about what happens to the Constitution," he said. "I am going to be with you. I am so proud you had the courage to stand up a year ago and say 'I do.'"

The mayor's politically charged

speech met with wild applause from the gay couples, whose reactions throughout the morning ranged from tears to cheers.

"I loved the mayor's speech. I love him for taking on the establishment," said Los Angeles resident Jason Lyon, who came up to San Francisco with his partner Tim Hartley and their 9-week-old son Noah Lyon-Hartley to celebrate getting married last year on February 14. "I think he was talking about Senator [Dianne] Feinstein, who has let us down. Feinstein might as well join the other party."

Hartley said the couple, together for six years, chose to make the trip up north this past weekend to show the public that the issue has not gone away.

"We are still very much married," he said.

Concord residents Cecelia and Deborah McBride, who married last February 13, said they felt it was important to attend the event in order to show support to the other couples.

"All straight and gay couples need to support our fight to gain the equality we are due as human beings. It is not a political statement, it is a statement of love," said Cecelia McBride. "My marriage to Deborah doesn't have any impact on a heterosexual couple's marriage. The fact we are denied the right to marry is absolutely absurd."

For Deborah McBride, she said the day brought tears of both joy and sadness.

"I am the one who has been crying on and off. I am happy because of the joy I share with Cecelia of being married and being part of history in the first round of marriage and being back to celebrate our anniversary, and sad because we are denied that right as human beings to love each other the way any couple does. It is unfair," said Deborah McBride, who also married Cecelia in a private ceremony in October 2000.

Being a part of Saturday's event brought them closer to the gay community and the other couples, who share the same feelings of joy and pain over getting married and then having the court annul their marriage, Cecelia McBride said.

"It makes us feel we have to stand up, stand out, and make ourselves heard, not just for our relationship but everyone whose relationship is not recognized by the state," she said.

State Assemblyman Mark Leno

(D-San Francisco) said the day reminded him of how far the gay community has come within a short period of time in its fight for marriage equality.

"On February 11 a year ago the thought of changing state law through the legislative process was a crazy dream by a crazy San Francisco legislator, but a day later that changed very dramatically," said Leno, who is the lead author on a pro-gay marriage bill in the state legislature. "A year later, through the persistence of volunteers, gay couples, our friends and supporters, we have moved the ball a great distance."

Last August, the California Supreme Court invalidated the same-sex marriages, and several same-sex couples have taken their cases to court.

By April, San Francisco Superior Court Judge Richard Kramer is expected to rule on the six consolidated cases challenging the state's marriage laws. No matter his decision, those fighting for marriage equality say they will press on with their fight.

"We are not nervous as a couple because our love stands regardless of what the courts say. It just prolongs our fight," said Cecelia McBride.

Lyon said he is confident the courts will rule in favor of gay marriage.

"It is right and this state has a tradition of leading on progressive issues," he said. "In the end it will happen one way or another."

Supervisor Bevan Dufty, who said Saturday renewed his faith in being a San Franciscan, also sounded a note of optimism on what the future holds.

"What took place February 12, 2004 was important and had meaning and will continue to have meaning as we fight through the courts," he said. "Eventually we will win."

Acknowledging that no matter how Kramer rules, the cases will be appealed to higher courts, Newsom characterized the court fight as "just a delay."

"I have great expectations but I am also pragmatic. Regardless of this decision there will be an appeal. It is just a delay," said Newsom. "If we are successful it could be a major tipping point. The Supreme Court is doing the right thing in New York. I could imagine the Superior Court in San Francisco doing the right thing. My gut tells me that is where we are going." ▼

Crystal meth users turn to experimental project to kick the habit

by Matthew S. Bajko

Crystal has been a part of Eric's life as far back as 1999, when a man he met through a sex ad introduced him to the drug.

"I had never used drugs before that. I remember it was really fun and I enjoyed it," said Eric. "The next time somebody asked me if I liked to do it, I said sure."

Soon, Eric found himself seeking out sexual partners who advertised they were into PNP – Internet shorthand for party and play. Like Eric, the men liked to use crystal and then have sex.

By 2001 Eric's speed use had gone from being just recreational to becoming a dependency issue.

"I would say at my worst it might have been periods of two or three months when I used once a week," he said. "If I did it on Friday night I would lose my entire weekend. I was walking a thin line with my job, too, at some point."

Recognizing he needed help to kick his speed habit, Eric enrolled himself in a 12-step modeled abstinence program with a local health provider. The regiment required him to attend group sessions three to four times a week. It didn't work.

"I felt it was really insincere and not something I responded to. In general 12-step programs I don't respond to," he said. "It en-

couraged an obsessive compulsivity in terms of I have been 45 and three-quarter days clean and sober. I just felt like I didn't need that nonsense. It seemed trite to me to try to have to remember and everyone clap when someone had gone through a certain step."

Still using crystal, Eric found himself at a loss, not knowing where to turn to find the kind of help he needed to kick the drug.

"My life was just not going anywhere. I wasn't killing myself like a lot of other people. I just wasn't advancing. I was stagnating," he said.

Ironically, it took getting a sexually transmitted disease for Eric to find the help he was looking for. Last December, while getting treated at City Clinic, he noticed a flyer for a new program to help gay men stop using speed. Called the Positive Reinforcement Opportunity Project, or PROP, the program is an experimental project that uses cash incentives to keep men clean and sober.

Eric spoke to the *Bay Area Reporter* about the project and his speed use on the condition his real name not be used. Eric, 38 and Caucasian, said so far he has been pleased with his involvement in PROP.

"For the person going into it, it is very appealing because it is a no-lose situation," he said.

There are no counseling sessions, no group meetings, no 12



Nate Birjukow checks urine for speed use as part of PROP (Positive Reinforcement Opportunity Project).

steps. Three times a week, the men in the project visit one of three sites around the city and pee in a cup. If their urine sample tests negative for speed, they are immediately applauded for not using the drug and are given a monetary voucher that they can later spend.

The financial award starts off small, at \$2.50, and builds up to a maximum of \$10 by the end of their second week in the program. For every three urine samples that

test negative for speed, they receive a bonus of \$10. By the end of the program, which lasts 12 weeks, the men can earn a maximum of \$453.75.

However, anytime the urine sample tests positive for speed, the person falls back to the beginning of their first week and will receive \$2.50 for their next negative test. Once they have three negative tests, they are then boosted back up to the \$10 award amount. Even though they have failed to remain off speed, they are still given encouraging words to do a better job next time.

"It's a different form of treatment with just positive reinforcement where we say 'Good job. You stayed clean.' We then give them their voucher because the positive reinforcement must be immediate," explained Nathaniel Birjukow, a community health specialist with the health department's STD Prevention and Control branch who is managing the PROP project. "If their test is dirty, they are never kicked out of the program. If it is dirty they are not given a voucher but are encouraged to return and provide a clean sample."

The health department began PROP on November 8 with a testing site at Ward 86 at San Francisco General Hospital. In recent weeks the project has set up testing sites at Magnet in the Castro and at Continuum's Tenderloin center.

The project is solely for gay men who have been chronic users of speed, meaning they have used the drug at least once a week during the last 12 weeks. They must also test positive for speed use within seven days of their first visit, though if they have a health provider who can attest they meet the drug use requirement, they will be accepted.

Men taking Ritalin or other medicines containing pseudoephedrine are excluded from joining the project, because they may have false-positive urine samples. Anyone who does not agree to refrain from using ecstasy and cocaine is also not allowed to participate.

About 30 men have enrolled in the project so far, with 170 more slots available. Most of the men are in their late 30s to mid 40s and predominately Caucasian, said Birjukow.

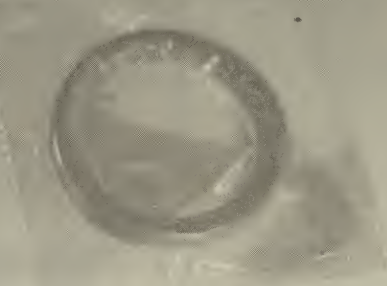
"A lot of men use crystal once a week and don't think they have a problem. This program could be useful for them or for people who don't like counseling," said Birjukow.

For Eric, the program seems to be working. He has been clean of speed for five weeks now. While he has a job, he said the extra money is a nice incentive to remain clean and will most likely be put toward paying off a credit card bill.

"Since that is such a motiva-

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Bears weekend

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the tracks before me. Putting IBR together is kind of like building your own custom vehicle," said Bebo. "We've had 10 years of practice in doing this and, over the years, people like Mark Katzenberger, Ed Costa, and Jason Macario have created a powerful engine. At the beginning of each IBR planning year you get to sit down, examine the engine and tweak it here and there."

New this year

One of the major tweaks Bebo and the rest of the IBR planning crew have done this year is to split the international bear competition and the gala dinner. Traditionally they've been on the same night, but venue and seating considerations have always hampered the number of people that can attend the dinner.

"Historically, they have always been together on the same night," said Bebo. "However, dinner has now been moved to Saturday with the contest remaining on Sunday. This has allowed us to add an entire evening of dinner entertainment, with big name acts, like the Kinsey Sicks and Mark Weigle,



Ready or not, here they come: The Bears of San Francisco volunteers at the Lone Star Saloon after a planning meeting.

while transforming the contest into more of a cocktail party."

Other changes from previous years include 50 percent more shuttle service for IBR registrants as they're driven from bar to bar

in the South of Market, a special screening of the feature film *Bear Cub* (thanks to CastroBear Presents), and new optional activities such as a Castro walking tour and a San Francisco City Hall tour.

Luckily, several of the bears who attended IBR last year are already quite familiar with San Francisco City Hall thanks to Mayor Gavin Newsom, who started issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples the same week of IBR last year. With an abundance of bears in San Francisco that weekend, many bear couples took advantage of this historic event. Jack Garceau and Steve Freitag were two of those lucky bears.

"We heard about it on the news the night before, and we decided to stop and get a license the next morning, with the plan of getting married on Valentine's Day. However, the line was so long we got the license and got married on the spot," Garceau said.

Garceau recalled that he saw several bear couples waiting in line to get married, so they stuck around and acted as witnesses for some of the other ceremonies. "The next thing we know, we're getting phone calls from the East Coast saying they saw us on the news!" Garceau said. "It was amazing. Even to this day, friends say they still see us in stock footage on the gay marriages."

The unfortunate nullification of the marriages last August has not dampened the couple's spirits. "We've been together for 10 years

and we got married because we finally had the legal right. We still plan on celebrating our 'one-year' anniversary on the 13th and we hope that other married bears attending IBR will celebrate as well."

Giving back

IBR has raised over \$150,000 for various charities over the years and BOSF has always prided itself on a diverse range of beneficiaries. When asked about this year's beneficiaries, Bebo is happy to keep with that tradition.

"We have reached out to beneficiaries that serve areas of the community where we have not donated before," he said. "So this year, we chose to donate to the gay arts and culture, children of gays, and to the mental and spiritual well being of those less fortunate health-wise. Our beneficiaries are the Queer Cultural Center, Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere, and the Sojourn Multifaith Chaplaincy — providing pastoral care to the LGBTQ patients of the San Francisco General Hospital afflicted with HIV and AIDS."

Of course, IBR is not the only bear gathering in the Bay Area. CastroBear Presents and the Sacramento Valley Bears are putting on their 10th Lazy Bear event at the Russian River later this summer and last year's Hair-rison event appeared out of nowhere — to very positive reviews. Does Bebo feel this is crowding the field in the Bay Area?

"People are always on the lookout for a party and the bear community is still growing," he noted. "It has now gotten to the size where sub-sections of beardom are highly prevalent and being more clearly defined every day. I don't think it is the number of bear runs that will be the issue. Some will transition into something we have not even imagined yet. Basically, with so many bear runs, each one will have to define for itself what kind of party it is."

Never content with a stagnant schedule of events, BOSF has again teamed up with several partners so attendees and locals alike will have plenty to do over the long holiday weekend. The *Bay Area Reporter*, BigMuscleBear.com, and Gus'n Castrobear are presenting two Sweat dance parties with premier DJs on Saturday and Sunday (more information on the back cover of the arts section). Other partner events include PlanetBIG dance parties on the 18th and 20th, a live rock show at the Eagle tonight (Thursday, February 17).

Also for those attending IBR this weekend, be sure to check out the "Hairy Bodies" art show at The Lab located at 2948 16th Street. Hairy Bodies is a group exhibition inspired by the eroticization and fetishization of large, hairy men. These artists explore and abstract this ideal of beauty, quite outside of the mainstream, through the mediums of video, photography, and installation. It's a fascinating exhibit and one that you won't want to miss.

Online registration for IBR is now closed and the dinner is sold out. However, BOSF will be offering walk-up registration starting on Friday, February 18 in the ballroom of the Ramada Plaza Hotel. Walk-up registrants will receive access to the hospitality suite and shuttle buses, as well admission to all the exclusive IBR parties over the weekend, with the exception of the dinner and the contest. A limited number of contest tickets may be available, so check at the BOSF store in the Ramada. ▼

For more information, visit www.BOSF.org.

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Polk Street

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permits to businesses. "No other bar has that volume of calls."

"Us calling the police to try to clear the area is very different from the community complaining about the business," Xavier responded, and Gallagher acknowledged that the record he had at the station primarily consisted of owner-initiated calls.

Xavier also took issue with the association's complaints about minors on the street outside, pointing out that underage people were obviously not bar patrons.

But aside from the problem of street traffic, said Rendez-Vous owners, there appears to be a bias against actual Rendez-Vous customers who may stand outside to smoke or socialize during bar hours.

Minutes from the January 10 meeting of the association state that the group wanted to have discussions with bar owners about "finding ways to improve its clientele," phrasing that Kapp said he found "offensive," particularly since his bar serves neighborhood residents who have been part of the fabric of the community for decades.

Early gay enclave

The Polk is often characterized as the less wealthy gay neighborhood in comparison to the Castro. As one of the city's first gay enclaves established by World War II veterans, it really took off as a gay neighborhood in the early 1960s, according to LGBT historian Susan Stryker, "as redevelopment and urban renewal forced the old gay subculture out of the Tenderloin."

"The Polk functioned as the slightly more stable, slightly less violent fringe of the increasingly tough scene in the lower Tenderloin," she said.

It was Polk Street that was the site of the first gay parades in San Francisco, and the gay bars there—including Club Rendez-Vous—have always functioned as organizing and fundraising venues for the LGBT community.

Many of the Polk's remaining residents from the early days reflect that history and diversity. Rendez-Vous' customers were primarily older men, said Kapp, local residents who have the same right

the customers' sexual orientation.

"What we're about is having a safer, cleaner, more beautiful neighborhood for people who live here, work here, and visit. A lot of the owners of the bars come to meetings, and pay attention to what the community needs. If people are falling down drunk in front of their bars they get them to move on. We think it's about taking ownership of your business and clientele," said Abst, pointing out that bars like the Lush Lounge and Vertigo have been transformed into mixed-clientele bars that are now "quite pleasant."

But the bars held up as good

The bars held up as good examples are former gay bars, now considered to be "cleaned up."

to the neighborhood as others do. Also attracted to the bar were area hustlers, as well as prominent officials like former Mayor Willie Brown, said Kapp.

"We want everyone there. We like the low life part as well as champagne and politicians," said Kapp. "If you are of age and behave and pay for drinks you are welcome inside."

Xavier agreed. "When the association talks about these 'undesirable elements,' in actuality, some of those people are probably our patrons standing outside having their cigarette," said Xavier. "And that's where there's this idea of the gay culture conflicting with their moral ideas."

Abst disagreed that the association's problems with Club Rendez-Vous has anything to do with

examples, noted Xavier, are former gay-specific bars, now considered to be "cleaned up."

Additionally, at the February 14 association meeting, Kimo's—another traditionally gay bar—was singled out as having inherited the problem crowds of Rendez-Vous. And word on the street is that the gay bar the Cinch is now receiving complaints from residents of a newly built condominium complex surrounding the bar. Owners at the Cinch were not available by press time to confirm these reports.

"It's obvious that something's going on," observed Dick Walters, a.k.a. Sweet Lips, a longtime Polk Street denizen who writes a column for the *Bay Area Reporter*. "It's been such a change of scenery through the years."

next page ▶

Dr. Jim Taylor, a management consultant with the Bay Group of Larkspur, California, died Monday, January 17 in San Francisco after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 61.

Dr. Taylor graduated from Haverford College, Phi Beta Kappa, and received his PhD in Classics from Harvard University in 1969. Following completion of his academic work, he taught classics at Newton College of the Sacred Heart in Massachusetts and at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. He subsequently entered the business world with Bernard Haldane Associates, an executive search and counseling firm.

For many years until retirement, Dr. Taylor was a management training executive with Hewlett Packard and its successor corporation, Agilent Technologies. Upon retirement from Agilent he was Worldwide Training Manager, Sales and Marketing, for the Semiconductor Products Group in Santa Clara, CA.

Following retirement, Dr. Taylor lived in Nantucket, MA, where he authored a book, "Libraries Can Be Lethal," published in 2002. He subsequently moved back to San Francisco, where he worked for the Bay Group, a professional consulting firm specializing in executive training. He was working on a sequel to his first mystery novel when diagnosed with cancer in mid-2004.

Jim Taylor was the son of the late Floyd J. Taylor, Minister of the First Parish Church (Unitarian) in Lexington, MA from 1946 through 1968, and of Margret Taylor, now living in Norwalk, CT. In addition to his mother, he is survived by his partner of 25 years, Jim Adams, of 26th Street in SF. He is also survived by his sister, Marilyn Nye Hannah and her husband Paul of Wilton, CT and by a niece, Margaret Taranto, a nephew, Paul Hannah III, three grand-nephews and one grand-niece.

A gathering of remembrance will be held on February 26 from 2 - 5PM at 4229 26th Street, SE. In lieu of flowers, it is requested that contributions be made in Jim's memory to the Floyd Taylor Youth Fund of the First Parish Church, 7 Harrington Rd., Lexington, MA 02421, or to Pathways Hospice, 909 Hyde St. #541, SF, CA 94109.



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Ski fever

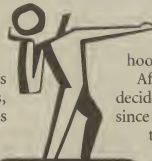
by Jim Provenzano

Ski lodges around the United States and Canada attract thousands of GLBT skiers and snowboarders annually, and this winter promises even more snowy fun. Large-scale events now draw thousands of circuit-party regulars, and smaller ski clubs throughout North America organize local events and trips to ski resorts. In addition to the Bay Area's SAGA North Ski Club, similar groups around the continent have inspired a flurry of ski trips and events.

David Hazzan, president of the Toronto Gay Ski/Snowboarding Club, formed his group in 2000, and he said he has his daughter to

thank for it.

When he was still married to a woman and not out as gay, he traveled with his daughter (already a novice skier) to Blue Mountain, north of Toronto, and took a few lessons. "By the end of the day," he said, "I was hooked."



Sports Complex

After coming out, Hazzan decided to start a gay ski club, since none existed in Toronto. "At first I thought it was a crazy idea," he said, since he was new to the sport at the time, and also new to being out and did a lot of work. Even if I only meet one or two ski buddies, it would be worth it."

Hazzan created a Web site and began promoting the group, which now has more than 200 members. The club has also started a GLBT youth ski trip for teens otherwise financially unable to try the sport. The next such event is in March.

The majority of club members are men, Hazzan said. "But we are trying to encourage women to participate — we now have a women's event and a membership coordinator to grow the ranks of lesbians."

For individual skiers, large-scale events like Altitude 2005 (held earlier this month at Whistler Resort in British Colum-



Snowbunnies at Altitude enjoy the view from the top.

bia) and the upcoming Ascent, the Winter Party at Lake Tahoe (February 27 through March 6 at Heavenly Mountain Resort) include dance parties, as well as music, comedy, and drag shows. Admission proceeds benefit several local charities.

One of Ascent's charity events will be the March 2 "A Rainbow of Hope," an evening to bring together seven diverse charitable organizations under one roof to be recognized by the event organizers. These seven entities are the stars throughout the eight-day gay ski week, though this one evening is dedicated to them and to what they bring to the world in terms of hope for their clients and to the public at large.

The Matthew Shepard Foundation is one of the beneficiaries of Ascent. The other national organization is the Point Foundation. Lake Tahoe area beneficiaries include Sierra Recovery Center, South Lake Tahoe Women's Center, Tahoe Arts Project, Tahoe Youth & Family Services, and the Sierra Foothill AIDS Foundation. Each charity will be an integral part of the evening.

The newest of the big events, Subaru's GLAAD Gay Ski Week in Telluride, Colorado (February 28 through March 7 at Mountain Lodge) benefits the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.

Some attendees of these events are avid skiers, while others go simply for the parties. Hazzan, who was at last year's Altitude, said he finds a balance between fun on and off the slopes. "There are lots of hardcore skiers," he said. "I've made a lot of ski friends while up there. The circuit crowd shows up later in the week."

But some of the big events can be too "circuitry" for serious skiers. Steve Mole, an active skier who lives in Pittsburgh, said he's not sure what the point is to having a circuit party at a ski resort. "I guess they see it as glamorous," he said. Mole created Pittsburgh's Steel City Skiers, which now has 100 members, about a dozen of which ski at least once a week throughout the sport's season.

While in college, Mole skied at Pennsylvania's Blue Knob, which

has "some of the most challenging skiing I've ever encountered," he said, describing the route as "very steep, canted sideways, with narrow, Volkswagen-sized moguls, and a drop-off, so you kiss the trees halfway up if you aren't careful. There is a sign on one trail that says 'Expert skier? You'd better be!'"

Mole said that he prefers smaller events like the recent Winter Rendezvous in Stowe, Vermont, which draws about 300 attendees. "That is a great group, very nice, down-to-earth people," he said.

While costs can dissuade some ski enthusiasts who can't afford equipment, ski clothes, pricey hotels, and travel expenses, local clubs in many cities continue to plan local ski trips for people in almost all economic levels.

Lee Bergeron admits he used to think circuit ski events were pricey, until he took over Altitude after the original producer died. "It's like trying to throw an event

on a desert island," he said. "Whistler is remote, and there aren't a lot of services. We have to ship everything in. Now that I'm involved in producing Altitude, I see there is a value for the production costs." ▼

Read more sports columns at www.sportscomplex.org.

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SPORTS BRIEFS

Sporting Life exhibit

Attention all GLBT jocks and former jocks! You have until this Saturday, February 19 to bring in your sports memorabilia to the GLBT Historical Society for its next exhibit, "Sporting Life: LGBT Athletics and Cultural Change from the 1960s to Today."

Photos, souvenirs, trophies, medals, and other items are coming in from nearly all sports teams and many individuals. Be a part of the first exhibit all about LGBT athletes!

Find out how to participate, visit the GLBT Historical Society, 657 Mission Street #300 in San Francisco. Phone: (415) 777-5455, ext. 1. E-mail sportinglifesf@yahoo.com.

Gay Games registrations on track

Gay Games registration figures are running well ahead of forecast, according to Gay Games VII Co-chair Sam Coady. "We ended 2004 with fully paid registrations that were 40 percent ahead of our year-end forecasts, and approximately 800 registrations ahead of the pace set by Sydney in the months before the 2002 Gay Games. We are confident we will reach or exceed our target of over 12,000 registered athletes and artists." Coady attributed the successful registration numbers to the network of international sports organizations working in partnership with Chicago 2006 as well as the \$3.5 million print, online, and television marketing campaign being conducted in six languages through more than 25 media sponsors.

During the last three days of 2004, noted Kevin Boyer, Gay Games registrations were coming in every 90 seconds as athletes and artists worldwide rushed to beat the early registration deadline. Chicago extended the deadline three days to accommodate last-minute signups and to account for different time zones and computer access issues.

Gay Games VII Sports and Cultural Festival will take place July 15-22, 2006. To register, visit www.gaygameschicago.org. ▼

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Polk Street

◀ previous page

Xavier acknowledged that the concerns of the association may be rooted in class issues rather than sexual orientation, but in a neighborhood like the Polk, he said, those issues go hand in hand.

"They are trying to get it to be a very chichi neighborhood, which is going to partially de-gay the Polk," he said.

Stryker, the former director of the GLBT Historical Society who is now working on a film entitled *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria* — which looks

at how class, gender, and sexuality intersected during San Francisco's "very own Stonewall" in 1966 — said that it is "often impossible to separate class issues from sexual identity."

"Let's face it — homophobic discrimination often has an economic impact. If you get kicked out of home as a teenager, that might affect your level of education or your ability to acquire marketable job skills," Stryker told the B.A.R. "This is especially true of neighborhoods like the Tenderloin and Polk Street, which have been magnets for marginalized queer youth for decades. Social space in bars is a vital resource for people with few

other places to go."

As for Rendez-Vous, Lower Polk Neighbors has agreed to continue to hear the owners' proposal, but Xavier and Kapp said they are about ready to move on, and re-open the bar outside of the neighborhood. It is a decision they may have to make for business reasons, but one that they said has disturbing implications for Polk's neighborhood gays.

"What we were doing was providing a space for our clientele, who were neighborhood people around since the heyday," said Xavier. "They are being shut out and soon there will be no place left that accepts them." ▼

Jamaica

◀ page 5

only within white society.

"Homosexuality is not perceived as a black thing. People think it is a foreign thing introduced by white people," explained Karlene. "They can't imagine having same-gender loving people who are Jamaican living together. To them, it's a no no."

The activists said they do not call for a tourism boycott because the hotels foreigners frequent employ many LGBT people.

"We won't push for a boycott on the tourism sector, otherwise more gays and lesbians would become unemployed. We wouldn't want that to happen," said Gareth.

What they do want is to see their government acknowledge the abuses that take place against gay Jamaicans and to denounce it.

"Then, they need to put in place policies to protect LGBT people and they need to repeal our sodomy laws," said Karlene. "There is nothing gay people have to defend themselves with. There is no one to stand up for ourselves. People think they have a right to continue abusing and terrorizing gay people in Jamaica."

Arriving in San Francisco a day after Mayor Gavin Newsom spoke out against other politicians who oppose granting gay couples marriage rights, neither Karlene nor Gareth said they could fathom having a Jamaican politician do the same back home.

"For me it is something far-fetched," said Gareth. "I hope that day will come but it will only come after more of us suffer physical abuse and die. How many more gay men and lesbians have to die before they realize we are all one people?"

While she believes that day will eventually come, Karlene said, "I don't think it will happen in my lifetime."

Having visited several gay sections in the towns they have visited, including stopping at the Cafe in the Castro on Sunday for happy hour, the two said what strikes them most is not only seeing how open LGBT people can be, but how nonchalant heterosexual people react.

"Seeing people kissing on the streets is amazing," remarked Karlene.

"What stands out most walking the streets is how free people are to be themselves," added Gareth. "You can see a guy who is effeminate or transgender people walking around freely, people in cafes embracing each other and even see heterosexual couples passing by and not staring."

Being able to hold his partner's hand is unfathomable back home, he said.

"Respecting people for who we are is so far-fetched from what is going on in Jamaica," he said. "Even at the thought of it they want to hurt us. The forces we are fighting against, if they even think about it there is going to be a reaction."

Yet they said they were stunned to hear an antigay reggae song by the group TOK played at a gay bar in Chicago. Gareth said even their hosts from Amnesty International did not realize that the song's lyrics used gay slurs. Once told however, they informed the DJ about the song's meaning.

"They didn't know. It was the last place for me I would expect to hear that song," said Gareth.

"I was so shocked; we just stood there," added Karlene. "It is hip to dance to reggae music, but if you are going to play a song in a gay club you must understand what it says."

Just last week the Gay Liberation Network reported that an agreement had been brokered in London where record companies, promoters, and publishing firms representing up to 90 percent of the reggae industry agreed to ban any future material that could be seen as inciting violence against lesbians and gays.

As for the international attention being paid to combating homophobic reggae artists, both Gareth and Karlene said the focus has been a double-edged sword for gay Jamaicans. "It has been good but at the same time the ripple effect is our life has been made far more difficult by supporters of these artists," said Gareth. "They say gay men are trying to stop these entertainers from making a living. There has been an increase in verbal and physical abuse against gay people."

Nonetheless, Karlene said she is still happy to see the discussion happening because "it is a start." It is also a reminder that as in America, success in the fight for gay rights comes incrementally and unexpectedly at times.

Asked on their trip by people they met why they don't remain in America, both Karlene and Gareth said they need to be in Jamaica, to carry on the fight for equality.

"We have to go back. We believe in what we are doing and we need to be treated as equal in the place we belong," said Gareth.

Added Karlene, "All of us can't run. Some of us have to stay and fight."

As for her life in Jamaica, she said she starts each day thinking, "Yes, I am glad to be living. But I am also saddened by another day where I hear about another brother or sister being beaten or raped. I think when we can get up and just go on living without having to look over our shoulders?" ▼

for an extended period," said Eric. While he is unsure what he will do at the end of the project, he doubts he will return to using speed.

"Probably at that point I will be as close to having a clear head – if I haven't done enough damage to my synapses and neurotransmitters – and I can look at my life again and decide what I want to do next," he said. "In terms of floundering like I feel I have been doing or use occasionally, I doubt I will want to do that because of the price and emotions it leads me to deal with the next week or five weeks. It leaves one with kind of a bad outlook on life." ▼

For more information or to join the project, call the PROP line at (415) 355-2000.

LEGAL NOTICES

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Mayor's Office of Community Development is pleased to announce the availability of a supplemental Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 2005-06 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. This RFP is specifically for planning, facilities, and public services, with an emphasis on low-income neighborhoods in the southeast sector. The RFP will be available only online beginning February 10, 2005. Proposals will be due by 8:00 p.m., Thursday, March 3, 2005. For more detailed information on the RFP and how to apply, please see MOCD's website at www.sfgov.org/mocd.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR:

PHLEBOTOMY SERVICES TO OBTAIN BLOOD EVIDENCE

It is the intention of the San Francisco Police Department to contract with a qualified Phlebotomist Service Company to provide on site blood draw services on arrested and incarcerated individuals of the San Francisco Police Department, and any other allied State or Federal Law Enforcement Agency, including but not limited to the California Highway Patrol, College of University Police, Performing Law Enforcement duties within the City and County of San Francisco. Services will be provided at designated sites, including: The Hall of Justice, 850 Bryant Street, Mission Police Station, 630 Valencia Street, and San Francisco General Hospital, 1001 Potrero Avenue.

Contractor must only provide Phlebotomists that are certified by the California State Department of Health Services.

Contractor will be required to provide these services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Deadline for Submission of written questions or requests for clarification: March 1st, 2005.

Proposals Due: March 22nd, 2005

For a copy of the Request for Proposal, contact Officer Shawn Wallace at 415-553-1096.

2992 CONTRACT COMPLIANCE OFFICER I - SALARY: \$ 62,270 - \$75,660 Annually + Benefits. The CCOF Office of Labor Standards Enforcement is seeking qualified Cantonese-speaking candidates to enforce Minimum Compensation and Health Care Accountability Ordinances. Qualifications: Equivalent of 2 years college + 4 years of exp. monitoring contracts, contract compliance, promoting EEO. To apply application materials and requirements, visit our Website at: www.sfgov.org/dhr. APPLY BY NOON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2005. City application and supplemental application required. Phone: (415) 554-4859, TTY (415) 554-7492. EEO/AA/People with Disabilities (PWD).

VACANCY NOTICES

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 54974, California Government Code, notice is hereby given of the following unscheduled vacancies. Interested persons may obtain an application from the Board's web site at www.sfgov.org/dhr/uploadedfiles/bdsuprvs/Vacancy_Notices/vacancy_app.pdf or from the Clerk of the Rules Committee, City Hall, Room 244, SF CA 94102. Completed applications should be submitted to the Clerk of the Board. All applicants must be residents of SF, unless otherwise stated. Additional information may be obtained by accessing the City's web site: www.sfgov.org/bdsuprvs

Depending upon the posting date, some vacancies may have already been filled. To determine if vacancies for this Task Force are still available, please call the Rules Clerk at 554-5184.

Park, Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee

Vacant seat, succeeding Isabel Wade, resigned, seat 5, must be nominee of District 2 Supervisor from list of organizations listed in Res. 168-01, for the unexpired portion of a two-year term ending 2/1/06.

Vacant seat, succeeding Erica Gabrielsen, resigned, seat 6, must be nominee of District 2 Supervisor from District 2, for the unexpired portion of a two-year term ending 2/1/07.

Vacant seat, succeeding Laura Bowlby, resigned, seat 14 must be nominee of District 1 Supervisor from District 1, for the unexpired portion of a two-year term ending 2/1/07.

Vacant seat, succeeding Catherine Rauscher, seat 19, must be nominee of District 5 Supervisor from list of organizations listed in Res. 168-01, for the unexpired portion of a two-year term ending 2/1/06.

STATEMENT FILE A-0282287-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: SP Hardwood Floors, 445 Harriet St. San Francisco, Ca. 94103. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Marek Burzynski. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/21/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/21/05. JAN. 27 FEB. 3, 10, 17 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282236-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: E & H Real Estate Investing, 136 Molino Drive, San Francisco, Ca. 94127. This business is conducted by a general partnership, signed Elizabeth Williams. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/20/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/20/05. JAN. 27 FEB. 3, 10, 17 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282220-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: All Wired Communications, 775 Goettingen St., San Francisco, Ca. 94134. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Walter Kent Anderson. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/04/00. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/20/05. JAN. 27 FEB. 3, 10, 17 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282139-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: 0N0, 400 Valencia St., San Francisco, Ca. 94103. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Vera Sholoviyaratana. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on N/A. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/14/05. JAN. 27 FEB. 3, 10, 17 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0281751-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Evolving Productions, 2642 Gough St. #102, San Francisco, Ca. 94123. This business is conducted by domestic partners, signed Veronica Labau and Christopher Grinstead. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 12/30/04. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/30/04. JAN. 27 FEB. 3, 10, 17 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282306-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Berger Design Build, 2067 Golden Gate Ave. San Francisco, Ca. 94115. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Brian Berger. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/24/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/24/05. JAN. 27 FEB. 3, 10, 17 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282343-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: B & S Crane & Erection Service, Inc. 1939 45th Ave. San Francisco, Ca. 94116. This business is conducted by a corporation, signed Susan Wanlass. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/01/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/25/05. FEB. 3, 10, 17, 24 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282379-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Catiun, 345 12th Ave. San Francisco, Ca. 94118-2108. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Daniel Catala. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/01/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/26/05. FEB. 3, 10, 17, 24 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282218-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Professional Resources, 332 Pine St. Suite 307 San Francisco, Ca. 94104. This business is conducted by a corporation, signed Ted Ammirio. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/01/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/19/05. FEB. 3, 10, 17, 24 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282415-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Vitalane Creative Design, 39 Boardman Place #104 San Francisco, Ca. 94103. This business is conducted by a corporation, signed Juancho Vitangol. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/01/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/27/05. FEB. 3, 10, 17, 24 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282418-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Patio Apartments, 8 Byron Ct. San Francisco, Ca. 94112. This business is conducted by a limited liability company, signed Cesar G. Aguelo Jr. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/27/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/27/05. FEB. 3, 10, 17, 24 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282383-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: The Pickled Hutch, 1405 Church St. San Francisco, Ca. 94131. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Lisa Wilson. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on N/A. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/26/05. FEB. 3, 10, 17, 24 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282375-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Georgina Acosta Medspa, 940 Bush St. San Francisco, Ca. 94109. This business is conducted by a corporation, signed Mina Coyota. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/26/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/26/05. FEB. 3, 10, 17, 24 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282499-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Spencer and Company, LLC, 491 Castro St. San Francisco, Ca. 94114. This business is conducted by a limited liability company, signed Dennis E. Spencer. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/31/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/31/05. FEB. 3, 10, 17, 24 2005

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME: #0280400

The following person(s) have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name known as Spencer and Company located at 491 Castro St. San Francisco, Ca. 94114. This business was conducted by an individual signed Dennis Edward Spencer. The fictitious name was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 11/01/04. FEB. 3, 10, 17, 24 2005

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME: #273451

The following person(s) have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name known as Speed Pro Towing Inc., located at 251 Capp St. San Francisco, Ca. 94110. This business was conducted by a general partnership signed Raul Oropeza. The fictitious name was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/06/04. FEB. 3, 10, 17, 24 2005

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME: #A80269833

The following person(s) have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name known as Allfix Handy located at 56 Seville St. San Francisco, Ca. 94112. This business was conducted by an individual signed Alberto Benarides. The fictitious name was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 9/10/03. FEB. 3, 10, 17, 24 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282296-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Eliza's Restaurant, 1457 18th St. San Francisco, Ca. 94107. This business is conducted by a corporation, signed Tran Thuy Luong. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 11/25/93. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/24/05. FEB. 10, 17, 24 MAR. 3 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282295-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Eliza's Restaurant, 2877 California St. San Francisco, Ca. 94115. This business is conducted by a corporation, signed Tran Thuy Luong. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 12/16/99. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/24/05. FEB. 10, 17, 24 MAR. 3 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282555-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Zoom and Look, 3844 21st St. San Francisco, Ca. 94114. This business is conducted by a general partnership, signed Lance Evans. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 2/1/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/1/05. FEB. 10, 17, 24 MAR. 3 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282558-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Cinematic Xpressions, 1261 Broderick St., Ste. 101, San Francisco, Ca. 94115. This business is conducted by a general partnership, signed Stephen Jang. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on N/A. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/1/05. FEB. 10, 17, 24 MAR. 3 2005

Crystal meth

◀ page 19

tion to me, after 12 weeks I hopefully won't have used. It is really going to help out. It is really going to be nice," he said. "It is nice to think that the program is positive reinforcement. It is nice to get a positive word and a little extra change in your pocket."

Having now been clean 84 consecutive days, it is the longest period of time he hasn't used crystal since 2000, Eric said. Adding to his determination is his desire to date someone, something he did not do during his speed use.

"It is something that seems more of a possibility now. Using with a new person every weekend really blows your chance to meet someone you might like to date

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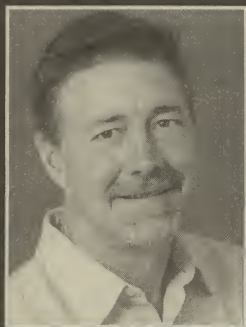


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LEGAL NOTICES

STATEMENT FILE A-0282562-00
The following person(s) are doing business as: Affordable Mortgages, 630 Grand View Ave. #208, San Francisco, Ca. 94114. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Gurinder Kang. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/1/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/1/05. FEB. 10, 17, 24 MAR. 3 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282086-00
The following person(s) are doing business as: Peabrain, 1292 Nve St. San Francisco, Ca. 94114. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Whitney Rader. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/1/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/13/05. FEB. 10, 17, 24 MAR. 3 2005

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LEGAL NOTICES

STATEMENT FILE A-0282617-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: InfoNuggets, 821 York St. San Francisco, Ca. 94110. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Stephanie J. Pappas. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 2/3/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/3/05. FEB. 10, 17, 24 MAR. 3 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282672-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: SNSN/Sign-N-Seal Notary Service, 3321 19th St. San Francisco, Ca. 94110. This business is conducted by an individual, signed JoAnne J. Maldonado. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/1/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/4/05. FEB. 10, 17, 24 MAR. 3 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282603-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Cyberbears, 3435 Cesar Chavez #206, San Francisco, Ca. 94110. This business is conducted by a limited liability company, signed David Green. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 9/12/02. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/2/05. FEB. 10, 17, 24 MAR. 3 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282636-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Gymboree Play and Music, 1525 Sloat Blvd. San Francisco, Ca. 94132. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Agnes Lau. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on N/A. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 1/25/05. FEB. 10, 17, 24 MAR. 3 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282403-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Bark n' Bun, 1650 Holloway Ave. #6 San Francisco, Ca. 94134. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Karim Salgado. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/26/05. FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282886-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Can-Cun Restaurant, 2288 Mission St. San Francisco, Ca. 94110. This business is conducted by a corporation, signed Gerardo Rico. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 6/6/00. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/11/05. FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282887-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Can-Cun Restaurant #1, 1003 Market St. San Francisco, Ca. 94103. This business is conducted by a corporation, signed Gerardo Rico. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 6/6/00. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/11/05. FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282830-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Taqueria Can-Cun #3, 3211 Mission St. San Francisco, Ca. 94110. This business is conducted by a corporation, signed Gerardo Rico. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/1/00. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/11/05. FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282830-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: 1)littleBIG Productions 2)Pervity.com, 4226 18th St. San Francisco, Ca. 94114. This business is conducted by a corporation, signed Kristen Alice Imler. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 2/9/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/9/05. FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282720-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Steve Justich Inter-Design, 619 14th St. #5 San Francisco, Ca. 94114. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Steven A. Justich. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/1/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/7/05. FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282799-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: 1)Big Muscle Media 2)Do I Have 3)What's In My Closet 4)AB Software 5)Bigmuscle 6)Big Muscle bears 7)Normal Gay 8)Beaoroff, 156 Shawnee Ave. San Francisco, Ca. 94112. This business is conducted by a limited liability company, signed William J. Sanderson. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 1/1/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/9/05. FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

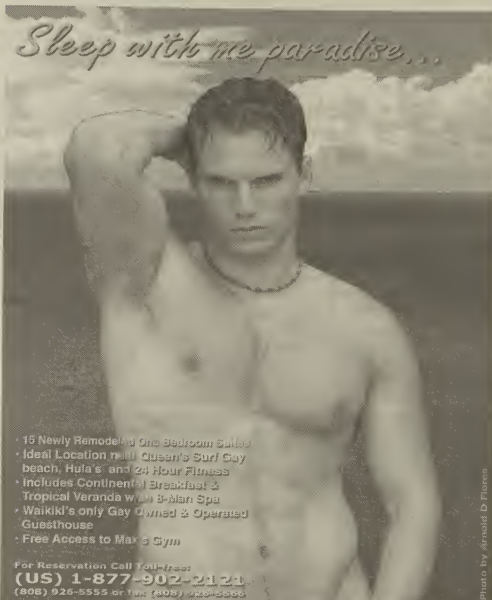
STATEMENT FILE A-0282762-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: 1)North Beach Model 2)North Beach Model & Talent 3)Henri Afrika 4)Rocker Guitars 5)Bay Arts & Music, 1350 Howard St. San Francisco, Ca. 94103. This business is conducted by an individual, signed John Z. Rocker. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on N/A. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/08/05. FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

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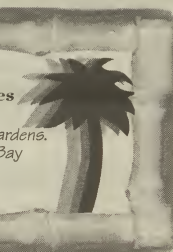
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LEGAL NOTICES

STATEMENT FILE A-0282754-00
The following person(s) are doing business as: Xin Li Electric, 2567 43rd Ave. San Francisco, Ca. 94116. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Xin Nuo Li. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 5/28/96. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/7/05.
FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282910-00
The following person(s) are doing business as: Phood Consulting, 3296 22nd St. San Francisco, Ca. 94110. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Peter Hood. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 3/31/00. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/14/05.
FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

STATEMENT FILE A-0282959-00
The following person(s) are doing business as: Ramon Campos DBA Jan-Pro, 1264 Fitzgerald Ave. San Francisco, Ca. 94124. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Ramon Campos-Caja. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 2/15/05. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 2/15/05.
FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

NOTICE OF APPLICATION TO SELL ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES
To whom it may concern: The Name of the Applicant(s) is/are: Pauline Tanya Ristau. The applicants listed above are applying to the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control at 71 Stevenson Street, Suite #1500 San Francisco, Ca. 94105, to sell alcoholic beverages at: 1441 Grant Ave. San Francisco, Ca. 94133. Type of License applied for: 41 - ON-SALE BEER AND WINE - EATING PLACE
FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3 2005

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME: #263178
The following person(s) have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name known as 1)Bearsfoot 2)Normalgay.com 3)Averagegay.com at 156 Shawnee Ave. San Francisco, Ca. 94112. This business was conducted by an individual signed William J. Sanderson. The fictitious name was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 12/23/02.
FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME: #263147
The following person(s) have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name known as 1)Big Muscle 2)Big Muscle bears 3)Big Muscle Media at 156 Shawnee Ave. San Francisco, Ca. 94112. This business was conducted by an individual signed Andrew J. Wysocki. The fictitious name was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 12/20/02.
FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME: #240007
The following person(s) have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name known as AB Software at 156 Shawnee Ave. San Francisco, Ca. 94112. This business was conducted by an individual signed Andrew J. Wysocki. The fictitious name was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 4/12/00.
FEB. 17, 24 MAR. 3, 10 2005

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO FILE # CNC 05541805
In the matter of the application of Scott Theodor Elisshans for change of name. The application of Scott Theodor Elisshans for change of name having been filed in Court, and it appearing from said application that Scott Theodor Elisshans has filed an application proposing that his/her name be changed to Nicholas Theodor Elisshans. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in Department 218 on the 12th day of April, 2005 at 9:00 am of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.
FEB. 17, 24, MAR. 3, 10 2005

NOTICES

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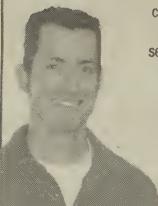
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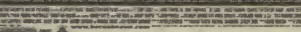
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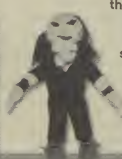
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Mister Marcus gives advance word of
Imperials, int'l bears, motorcycle awards.

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Back on the barstool
'In the Bars' meets the
Pendulum bartenders.

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Live from New York
'Backstage' reports from
Broadway & Off-B'way.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

BAY AREA REPORTER

Vol. 35 • No. 7 • 17 February 2005



Former hustler with high-lit creds.

PICKING UP JOHN RECHY

GETTING 'BENEATH THE
SKIN' OF L.A. AUTHOR

by Kevin Davis

Beneath the Skin, The Collected Essays of John Rechy with Added Commentaries by the Author; Carroll & Graf, \$14.95

That John Rechy includes in his essay collection *Beneath the Skin* a strident 1993 letter criticizing a celebrated author for merely concurring with a spiteful review of his first novel, *City of Night*, displays an unlovely persecution complex.

"I have, Mr. [Gore] Vidal, produced a body of work that is as authentic and worthy as that of any other writer of my generation," Rechy writes, and later reminds the review publication's editor of his inclusion in the Oxford Companion to American Literature.

But he is disingenuous in thinking that *City of Night*, the 1963 story of a straight-acting male prostitute illuminating street-life sex-trade, treating his clients, "nelligs, fags and queens," as the peculiar, pathetic other, is noble. Rechy calls himself a long-time champion of ballsy drag queens, and warns gay people not to mirror our oppressors through *machismo*.

The former hustler recites his high-lit credentials: his novels are

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A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO NIAGARA FALLS

PERFORMER TIM MILLER BRINGS 'US' TO YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

by Elizabeth Khuri



On stage in US, Tim Miller is wildly outrageous, cracking jokes about the busy-ness of the American flag, expounding upon the therapeutic benefits of striptease and working the audience into a lather of laughter and political outrage. In person, he is calm, almost subdued, an articulate counterpoint to the bitter yet funny text of *Us*, which comes to Yerba Buena Center for the Arts this weekend.

"Gay people and immigration are

two of the most hot-button subjects in America right now," Miller, 46, mused. Appropriately, his latest piece of performance art deals with these topics, created in response to the difficulties he and his partner of 11 years, Australian Alistair McCarthy, continue to experience as they struggle to stay in the United States.

Without the rights that heterosexual couples employ, such as the ability to sponsor their spouse for a Green Card,

the couple may have to relocate to England next year when McCarthy's visa runs out. They've already poured thousands of dollars into the INS over the past decade, and the years of stress have left their mark on Miller. Everything from whether to buy a dog (they were concerned about England's quarantine laws) to the anxiety of possibly uprooting their entire life has become an ordeal.

From his cozy bungalow in Venice,

page 35 ►

SECOND OF TWO SECTIONS

The man who fell to earth

New Wave cult figure remembered in queer film

By Roberto Friedman

Cast your mind back now, or what's left of it, to the heady days of the early '80s, the New Wave era, when stars of the underground scene dressed like extras from Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* on acid. Even among hipsters, however, rock countertenor Klaus Nomi stood out. Part documentary, part movie musical, Andrew Horn's film *The Nomi Song* plays the Castro Theatre from Feb. 18-24.



Love child of Maria and Elvis?

On the verge of his breakthrough to stardom, Nomi was one of the first victims of AIDS. But he cut a huge swath of influence in his short time in the spotlight, for a guy who looked like an alien and performed like "the love child of Callas and Elvis Presley" (*Libertine*). Pop star Morrissey once wrote, "Klaus Nomi's dismal dignity placed him beyond the reach of crassly commercial success. Nomi sang like a man trapped in the body of a dead girl." *The Nomi Song* won the 2004 Teddy Award, the official queer film award at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Bear uncut

Don't look now, but here come the ursine hordes! International Bear Rendezvous (IBR), which herds into SF over 8,000 bears and their admirers from around the world, will be showing the unedited European version of the criti-

cally acclaimed (B.A.R. included) Spanish-language film *Bear Cub* at Bear HQ, the lovely Ramada Inn on 8th St., this upcoming weekend.

When the movie opened in US theatres, there was some footage, including frontal nudity, which wound up on the cutting-room floor. Sources speak of, in particular, a scene of a large, hairy man rolling a condom onto his big, fat, uncult wanker. So now you know the whole *tamale*.

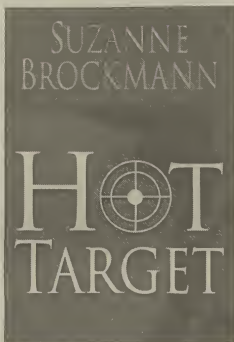
IBR is a community fundraiser, and this year's "Spirit of the Bear Award" will be given to our town's own beloved, bearded film maven Jan Wahl. The award is given to people who are not necessarily in the bear community, or a part of any organization that caters to bears, yet who have done something that helps the bear community. So just because Wahl's getting an award doesn't mean she's especially hairy or any kind of beast. The whole idea is both sweet and unbelievably beary.

Bear Cub the Movie, The Unedited Director's Cut screens (with English subtitles) on Friday, Feb. 18, 9 p.m. in the Ramada's Whitcomb Ballroom. Free with IBR registration, open to the public for \$7, popcorn and bears included. Doors open wide at 8:15 p.m.

Hottie targets

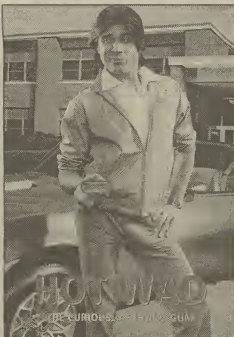
Author Suzanne Brockmann has published over 40 books in the "military suspense" genre, but her latest, *Hot Target*, is touted by her publisher Ballantine Books as "the first high-profile mainstream contemporary romance novel to feature a subplot that deals with an in-depth romance between gay characters." The story's FBI-agent hero is openly gay, and the book is dedicated to the author's gay son.

The *New York Times* Book Review says it's unlikely that Brockmann's novels will get confused with late crime-author Patricia

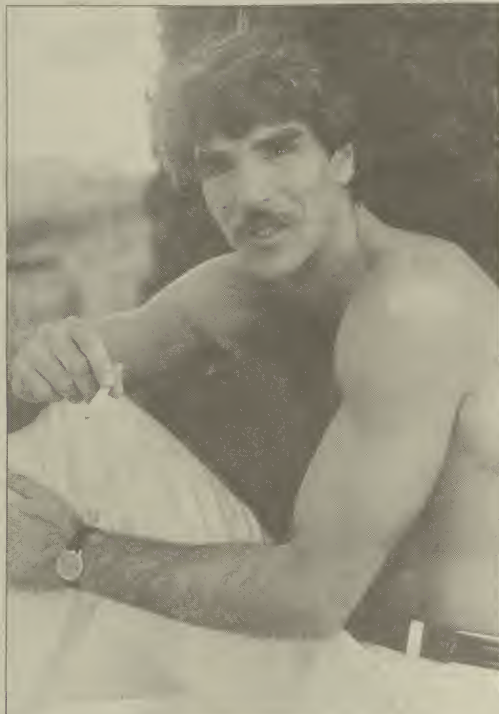


Highsmith's *oeuvre* any time soon. But apparently there are charms that await when you mix paid-by-the-yard genre fiction with gay subplot characters. "When Brockmann's gay G-man collars a homophobic young mugger," the *Times* reports, "he says to him, 'You, sweetie, have the right to remain silent.' And anything you whip out may be held against you."

But what in god's green earth was the *Altoid's* company thinking in its new *Hot Wad* campaign? With a model who looks



Who's your 'Hot Wad' daddy?



Deep Throat superstar Harry Reems opens up for AVN.

like an extra from *Welcome Back, Kotter* wearing tight pants that barely conceal his package, exactly to which "hot wad" is the breath-mint company referring? We've seen the wad ad in the *Wad-vocate*, but also in larger-format *Rolling Stone*, which has an ostensibly straight readership, right? We mean, despite the well-known proclivities of *RS* editor/publisher Jann S. Wenner.

Follow that story!

Last week, our old wire-service friend Reuters reported that actor Tom Sizemore was jailed in Los Angeles for violating his probation by failing a drug test after he was caught trying to use a prosthetic penis to fake the results.

like the sample proved too cool to have come from Sizemore's body, and he was asked to remove his pants.

According to prosecutors, Sizemore had been caught once before trying to use a similar device, sold over the Internet under the brand name the *Whizzinator*. But we give him lots of points for creativity.

Catch this bulletin from Dimension Films re writer Kevin Williamson and director Wes Craven's *Cursed*, set to open nationwide Feb. 25: "Attention, Press: The February 17 screenings have been cancelled. *Cursed* will no longer be screening for review." Apparently, the movie's title is explanation enough.

Also cursed: the spoken-word HIV-med. ad folded into the February issue of *Out* magazine. Open the mag's center-spread, and through the miracle of digital technology you hear the annoying ring of a cell phone, followed by an HIV+ dude purring, "Hey-hey, we're at the beach! Catch you later!" And don't forget to bring the *atazanavir sulfate*!

Hey-hey, some B.A.R. readers enjoyed last week's review of *Inside Deep Throat*, but were *mucho* disappointed not to see a photograph of erstwhile porn star/current real-estate salesman Harry Reems, a man who can say he truly was *Inside Deep Throat*. So, courtesy of our own Deep Throat, we pass along this lovely pic above. "Too bad we can't run a photo of his cock," adds DPT. "It's classic."

In an interview in the current issue of *Adult Video News*, Reems explains much of the backstory left out of the *Bailey/Barbado* documentary, for reasons of time. He cites the 1968 relaxation of postal regulations as the key element which encouraged and allowed the burgeoning sexual revolution to arrive on movie screens. To wit: *Deep Throat* appeared in 1972, the same year as



He tried the old fake-cock trick.

Seems the actor is required to undergo random drug tests as a condition of probation for his convictions on separate charges of methamphetamine possession and beating his ex-girlfriend, former Hollywood madam Heidi Fleiss.

Sizemore (does this qualify as a "namephreak?") was caught using a fake cock sewn into his boxer shorts, filled with a clean urine sample kept warm by a heating pack. The ruse was revealed when the temperature of

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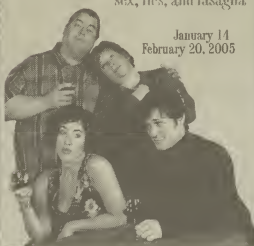
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THEATRE

Breakdown place

'Rescue and Recovery' after the closet

by Richard Dodds

The putative hero of *Rescue and Recovery* arrives on the stage naked, but he's actually carrying a lot of baggage.

Cameron was a repressed and closeted homosexual who pretended to be straight with his wife and kid before the divorce. He's a recovering alcoholic who also got into trouble with cocaine and painkillers. He's obsessed with the size of his penis, even though his ex-wife assures him he's "more than adequate." And did I mention he's an asshole?

He's a physician who begins an affair with a younger man who eventually leaves him. "I can't believe I've been dumped by a bank-teller," he says, never renouncing his obnoxiously elitist ways. In fact, none of the play's characters change much, despite the urgency in which husband and ex-wife reenact their story through flashbacks for the audience. Well, all right, maybe they are a little bit sadder, if not a lot wiser.

But many of the individual scenes in Steve Murray's play are sharply written, providing an intensity that builds through the first act and into the second before the playwright winds up juggling a few too many balls. Until then, director Christopher Jenkins' production (except for the miserable set) at the New Conservatory Theatre Center matches the snap of Murray's writings.

Cameron and Janie are introduced as the model modern ex-spouses after the closet door opens. But Cameron, hampered by a demanding job and lingering guilt, doesn't make much use of



Jennifer Dean as Janie, Bill Olson as Cameron in *Rescue and Recovery*.

his new freedom, while Janie is continually tossing off asides to the audience that reveal the bitterness behind her liberal public persona. They find themselves wrapped up in the affairs of a gay couple and a bank-teller friend, leading to sex, hurt, and unpleasant revelations.

Bill Olson and Jennifer Dean head the strong cast as Cameron and Janie, creating characters that feel real and never lose a basic appeal despite bouts of unsympathetic behavior. Noah Kelly is particularly delightful as half of the gay couple, a theater queen with a seductive manner despite his failing health. Javier Galito-Cava deftly plays the other half of the

couple, a quiet guy with some unexpected talents. Joseph Barham doesn't quite fill out the role of the hunky bank-teller, but his performance still sustains the needs of this often funny but curiously downbeat play. ▼

Rescue and Recovery will run at New Conservatory Theatre Center through March 6. Tickets are \$26 - \$32. Call 861-8972 or go to nctcsf.org.



Aimee Guillot, Michael Shipley, Jamie Jones in Adam Bock's new play.

Type casting

'The Typographer's Dream'

by Richard Dodds

His review is being written in Times New Roman, but you will be reading it in some other typeface. And however imperceptibly, it will create a different response. That's the power of typography.

"Truth becomes opinion in the hands of an unethical typographer," says the tightly wound Margaret, the title character in Adam


Bock's mesmerizing *The Typographer's Dream* at the Thick House.

The play begins in a deceptive casual manner, with house lights up and the actors pattering about before taking their places at a long table. In front of each character is a little sign announcing his or her profession: typographer, geographer, and stenographer. Uh oh, we are at a panel discussion.

But the dryness that the setup suggests progressively gives way to

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Cal Performances





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Report from a week on Broadway & Off-Broadway

by Richard Dodds

At last I can say I danced on Broadway. Well, actually it was at an off-Broadway theater, but it was a *big* off-Broadway theater. And the show *may* transfer to Broadway.

The show in question is *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, seen during a recent theater-going mission to New York. Because it was created by James Lapine and William Finn, who worked together on *Falsettos*, the musical promised some heft behind a seemingly light-weight premise.

I was making my way into the Second Stage Theater when a cheery young man asked me if I'd like to be a part of the show. "If you're a good speller," he added.

Thinking that if I made a fool of myself, it would be done anonymously — and I didn't say "theater critic" when asked what kind of work I do — I figured it might be fun.

Four of us were chosen from the audience to augment the cast playing teenage spelling champions, and we were given some simple instructions before we got on stage. Most important: Don't act or mug.

The "real" spellers, all played by adults, included an over-achieving Asian girl, an idiot-savant nerd, a poor little rich girl, a space-cadet boy, and an adopted pig-tailed girl with two dads. One by one, they are eliminated until a new champ is chosen, and everyone has delivered a song about themselves. By that point, we ringers had all been sent back to our seats, usually

after getting an easy word right, an impossible word wrong, and some sort of joke at our expense. ("Mr. Dodds has a birthmark in the shape of the Philippines," announced the moderator as I made my way to the microphone, acting like I wasn't acting.) The consolation prize: a hug from a dangerous looking "comfort counselor" and a single-serving juice box.



Backstage

But before our elimination, the cast pulled us center stage and whispered instructions as they broke into a dance routine. "Shimmy," ordered the space cadet, who was my main handler.

It was fun to watch the show from the cast's vantage, but frankly, it's a lousy way to review a show. But if pressed, I'd have to say I was a little disappointed at how slight the show seemed — especially coming from the likes of Finn and Lapine. But it was a kick until a misspelling sent me into the c-r-e-p-u-s-c-u-l-e of my New York stage career.

And now for a quick look at the other sampled shows, none of which encouraged audience members to climb on stage.

Millburn, NJ, home of the Papermill Playhouse, is an easy train ride from Manhattan, so I was able to catch the world-premiere production of *Harold & Maude: The Musical*. It's a sweet, tiny show that should be seen in a venue far smaller than the Papermill — and even smaller than the Lucie Stern Auditorium in Palo Alto, where TheatreWorks will present the musical this summer.

Harvey Fierstein as Tevye, Andrea Martin as Golde in *Fiddler* revival.

the roles created on screen by Michael Caine and Steve Martin.

The Musical of Musicals — The Musical!, at the new Dodgers Stages mini-mall of small theaters, sets out to have sport with several of the great names in Broadway songwriting. It's something like *Forbidden Broadway* without the topical references.

The four-person, one-piano, no-set show opens with its strongest segment as it captures the essences of many Rodgers and Hammerstein songs and then throws them into a musical Cuisinart. A comparable inspiration is missing in the subsequent "tributes" to Stephen Sondheim, Jerry Herman, Andrew Lloyd Webber, and Kander and Ebb.

I finally caught up with *Avenue Q*, which, this late in the run, I might have skipped in expectations of a road company turning up in SF. But the producers of this warm-hearted adult variation on *Sesame Street* have announced that they will be skipping a tour in favor of an open-ended run in Las Vegas. It seems mercenary and hypocritical, considering the message of the musical. But I still liked the show.

Coming soon to a gay theater near you: *Texas Homos*, a comedy-drama with a more serious intent than its title suggests. Written by Jan Buttram, the Texas-born artistic director of the tiny Abingdon

Theater, this world premiere follows the plight of two of a small town's leading citizens, both married with children, when they are entrapped along with the town faggot by a hunky undercover cop at a public restroom. Soul-searching and cover-ups collide in intense battles before the play ends in a split decision for truth.

Short scenes

• The journey from Midwestern schoolboy to Bay Area diva is told in first-person fashion in *Family Jewels: The Making of Veronica Klaus*. Co-created by director Jeffery Hartgraves, the new show includes original songs by Klaus, covers of popular standards, and monologues about her experiences. At the Exit Theatre through March 12; call 820-1565 or go to steinbeckpresents.org.

• New Conservatory Theatre Center is hosting a benefit show for Richard "Scrumby" Koldewyn to help with medical bills following a heart attack last month. *You Gotta Have Heart*, set for Feb. 28, will include food, drink, a silent auction, and a wide variety of performances — including Koldewyn himself. Tickets are \$35. Call 861-8972. ▼

Richard Dodds can be reached at BARstage@aol.com.

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TheatreWorks has apparently cast a name-personality as Maude, but it won't be Estelle Parsons, who is delightful as the 80-year-old free spirit who befriends a troubled teenager. Tom Jones (*The Fantasticks*) efficiently adapted the screenplay, and has supplied some uncomplicated lyrics for Joseph Thalken's generic score.

The appeal of another viewing of *Fiddler on the Roof* itself was nil, but the chance to see Harvey Fierstein as Tevye was enough motivation to shell out for a ticket to this sumptuous reimagined revival.

Fierstein, whose *La Cage aux Folles* is playing right across the street, replaced Alfred Molina, and is said to put the heart back into *Fiddler*. It's indeed a warm and funny performance, nicely complemented by Andrea Martin's Golde, that makes something of a statement. Here's a famously gay man successfully starring in an ultimate family-values musical, with no one batting an eye.

Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, seen at a preview, seems to take its inspiration from *The Producers*. Adapted from a movie that starred two mismatched con men, and openly acknowledging its theatrical devices, the new musical has its silly-fun moments and may wind up with a healthy run.

The songs by David Yazbek (*The Full Monty*) are agreeably spoofy variations on show tunes, but the best thing about the show is seeing John Lithgow and Norbert Leo Butz happily ham it up in

Reed Birney and Michael Busillo in the comedy-drama *Texas Homos*.

MUSIC

Villazón takes France

Mexican tenor with heart & soul

by Jason Victor Serinus

He's got the stuff, and he's eager to share. Of all the new tenors on the operatic scene, it is Mexico's Rolando Villazón who offers the winning combination of vocal weight and beauty needed for both lyric and dramatic leads. Though the voice is not huge, it is strong, virile and fresh throughout the range. Capable of a glorious, unforced high C, Villazón possesses sufficient metal for the Italian leads of Puccini and Verdi, as well as the elegance and subtlety of phrasing essential for portraying the romantic principals of French opera.

A graduate of the San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program, Villazón first came to international attention in 1999, when he won second prize in Plácido Domingo's Operalia competition, as well as first prize for Zarzuela and the Prize of the Public. Making his European debut in Genoa as the lead in Puccini's *Manon*, he then debuted in Lyon and Rome as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*. Performances in one of his signature roles, Alfredo in *La Traviata*, followed the same year.

San Francisco first heard him as Alfredo last fall, shortly after he sang the part at his Met debut opposite Renée Fleming. With his debut recording of Italian arias named one of *The New York Times*' "Best Classical CDs of 2004," the tenor looks forward to seven Salzburg Festival/summer performances of *La Traviata* with Anna Netrebko and Thomas Hampson that sold out in record time.

Villazón's second recital for EMI, *Massenet/Gounod Arias*, reached stores late last month. As in his first recital, it combines familiar classics with rarely heard arias from nearly forgotten operas.

Able supported by Evelino Pidó and L'Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Villazón opens with the most well-known aria from Massenet's *Le Cid*, "O souverain, O juge, O père." Ever since Enrico Caruso's great recording of the work,



Rolando Villazón sings 15 Massenet & Gounod arias on a new CD.

tenors have thrown their all into this gem in hope of winning audiences over. Villazón more than meets the challenge. His ardor, passion, and unforced beauty make the performance sound true.

The same could be said of all 15 arias on the disc. Some singers have fabulous voices and make all the right sounds, but too many sound more like they're dutifully going through the paces than actually believing in the fantasy they're singing about. With Villazón, there's no question that this is the real thing. The mounting passion of Werther's "Lorsque l'enfant revient" is thrilling, the high C in Gounod's "Salut, demeure chaste et pure" from *Faust* about as good as it gets. "La Rêve" from *Manon* may lack the ultimate sweetness and changes of color that Jussi Björling and Richard Crooks brought to it, but abetted by Natalie Dessay's incomparably sweet cameo as Manon, it is a memorable performance. Even in arias more commonplace than inspired, Rolando Villazón throws such heart and soul into the music that cries of bravo merely begin to tell the tale. ▼

Typographer's

◀ page 31

passion as the characters alternate in describing their jobs, inadvertently revealing more and more about their own selves as they explain their work in increasingly personal terms. Before the end of this densely packed 70-minute play, the panel discussion will have collapsed into a furious battle of wounded egos.

The Encore Theatre Company, which produced Bock's delightful *Five Flights*, again does right by the former SF playwright. Tightly yet exuberantly directed by Anne Kauffman, the production features a trio of excellent performers who make us believe in their characters' sometimes unlinked connections to their work.

That's also part of the wonder of Bock's writing, as his characters provide knowledgeable insights into their professions before taking us willingly into their own elaborate visions of their work. It's only at the end, when calm returns after verbal pyrotechnics, that the message feels somewhat amorphous.

Arriving late and disheveled, the typographer Margaret is the least stable of the group, and Aimee Guillot gives a performance both funny and sad in the increasing desperation of the character's unhappiness. Michael Shipley is wonderful as the slightly nerdy gay stenographer Dave, who tells us court reporting can be a thrilling profession because of its required neutrality. "I'm very good at being careful," he says, which we learn has not always been a good thing in his personal life.

But my favorite performance comes from Jamie Jones, who is instantly recognizable as the prim and professional geographer Analise, a character we rightly suspect is repressing passion and pleasure by turning her work into something of a substitute lover. Her booze-fueled meltdown in a flashback is a show unto itself. ▼

The Typographer's Dream will run at the Thick House through Feb. 27. Tickets are \$20. Call 821-4849 or go to encoretheatrecompany.org.

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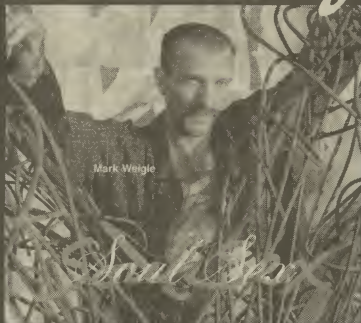
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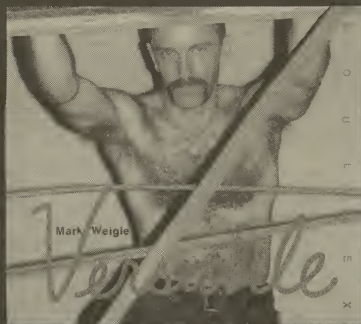
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Young soprano hits the heights

Stefania Bonfadelli on 'Traviata' & 'Lucia' DVDs

by Philip Campbell

Lyric coloratura soprano Stefania Bonfadelli has conquered the major opera houses of Europe at a young age. Her repertoire ranges from the bel canto roles to French opera. Her Verdi heroines include Gilda, Violetta, and Nannetta.

She has made her North American debut at the Detroit Michigan Opera Theatre, but it is clearly time for a splashier welcome in a big American venue. It shouldn't be too great a jump from Vienna, La Scala and Covent Garden to the Met, Chicago or San Francisco. David Gockley, are you listening?

Two DVD releases on the TDK label make it possible for local listeners to bring La Bonfadelli into their own homes, and find out what the buzz is about.

La Traviata - Giuseppe Verdi Bonfadelli; Piper; Bruson; Orchestra & Chorus of Fondazione Arturo Toscanini Plácido Domingo, conductor Franco Zeffirelli, director

Legendary stage director Franco Zeffirelli was an amazingly energetic 78-year-old when he created this definitive production for the lovely little Teatro Giuseppe Verdi in Busseto, Italy.

Every set is wonderfully evocative and detailed. The movement of the ensemble is always well-considered, and with tenor Plácido Domingo in the pit, how could this *Traviata* miss?

It helps to have a trio of great singing actors in the principal roles, and Zeffirelli cast them from strength, gambling with two youngsters of tremendous promise and an old pro who can still deliver.

From the first strains of the *Preludio*, illustrated by a haunted Violetta wandering amidst the ruins of her past, to the final heart-wrenching death scene, this *Traviata* of subtle and primal emotions.

Domingo conducts with the



understanding of a singer, and the entire cast responds with mostly beautiful singing and entirely credible acting.

Renato Bruson as the father Germont is something of a wonder at 65. He looks the part, but he also sings with great authority, only revealing slight signs of wear. The audience loves him, and he is warmly received.

The stunning intensity of Bonfadelli's extended freak-out is a revelation. She looks like a cross between Carrie and Miss Haversham.

Handsome American tenor Scott Piper is a mixture of shyness and stiff manners at first, and I worried about his overall performance. He took a calculated risk. His idiomatic accent and pure-toned singing are both ardent and complex. He develops as one of the most carefully shaded Alfredos in memory.

Stefania Bonfadelli makes the tragic courtesan Violetta unforgettable. Her slim build and large vulnerable eyes betray a fatalism that works well in a detailed portrayal. Once she has dispatched the ornamental terrors of "Sempre libera" in Act I, her voice gains in delicacy, and her arias become exquisite soliloquies. I defy anyone

to remain unmoved by her demise at the conclusion.

The curtain calls are received as a group, and it is fitting for such an integrated production. Even Zeffirelli remains in line, though the crowd goes wild for him.

Numerous fascinating extras are featured on the second disc.

Lucia di Lammermoor -

Gaetano Donizetti Bonfadelli; Alvarez; Frontali; Orchestra & Chorus Teatro Carlo Felice

Patrick Fournillier, conductor Graham Vick, director

After Graham Vick's woefully revisionist *Falstaff* at Covent Garden, I feared the worst from his treatment of *Lucia*, the sturdiest of bel canto operas. Thankfully, he restricts his meddlesome touch to some minor distracting stage business and the expressionist sets.

Monochromatic colors with touches of realism (trees, pastel heather, and splashes of blood-



dictable in his acting, but marvelous to hear. His suicide at the finale is nearly as electrifying as the heroine's mad scene. Considering the composer's mighty risk in killing off the prima donna first, it is noteworthy that Alvarez manages to keep momentum.

Baritone Roberto Frontali is satisfying and darkly menacing as Lord Enrico. His voice is not in the same league as some other stars of the moment, but his performance is convincing.

Stefania Bonfadelli does not have the sheer beauty of tone or line that other sopranos have given to Lucia. Sills had that silvery quality, and Sutherland was almost frightening in her accuracy, but Bonfadelli can act as well as Sills, and she always hits the notes fearlessly.

Her waif-like quality and those saucer-shaped eyes make her enchantment truly affecting. The early solos and her participation in the famous Sextet are excellent. Still, without a *tour de force* in the 15-minute mad scene, her performance might have been dismissed.

The stunning intensity of Bonfadelli's extended freak-out is, however, a revelation. Standing in a bloodied wedding dress and looking like a cross between Carrie and Miss Haversham, the courageous soprano brings down the house. The ovation and heartfelt "brava" proclaim the arrival of a potential superstar, and a real call to attention for American impresarios. ▼

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Los Angeles Times

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The surreal life, circa 1940

by Robert Julian

February House by Sherill Tippins; Houghton Mifflin, \$24

What would it be like if you filled a Brooklyn Heights house with leading international figures in literature and the arts, threw in a stripper for good measure, and stirred the mix with regular appearances by Salvador Dali and his loony wife Gala? In 1940, former *Harper's Bazaar* editor George Davis did just that at 7 Middagh Street, in an uncanny foreshadowing of MTV's *The Surreal Life*. The result was a collision of artistic and intellectual sensibilities that instigated great accomplishments and more than a few wild nights of debauchery, courtesy of the many sailors the male and female residents dragged home from the

Brooklyn shipyards.

Davis was a respected, talented editor and writer, and an open homosexual, whose tenure at *Harper's Bazaar* came to an abrupt end due to his inability to stop partying and take direction. With America on the brink of war, he rented a house in Brooklyn and invited artists he knew to share the rent. All the men were gay, and they included W.H. Auden (the house "mother," who managed accounts and collected rent), Benjamin Britten and his lover Peter Pears, Paul Bowles, and Klaus Mann. The female residents were Jane Bowles, Carson McCullers, and Gypsy Rose Lee. Davis' original idea was to free himself and his fellow artists from the straightjacket of bourgeois thinking and form a mutually supportive environment that would foster great accomplishments. In some cases, it worked.

Author Sherill Tippins accomplishes a major feat with *February House*, documenting a time and place that no longer exists (the house was demolished in 1945). Her title comes from the fact that most of the Middagh Street residents shared February birthdays. Interestingly enough, the artists who most benefited professionally from their residency were Gypsy Rose Lee and Carson McCullers. Lee began writing her best-selling novel *The G-String Murders* while in residence, and with the tutelage of Davis and others, steered her life in an entirely new direction. McCullers, who separated from her husband to join the clan, received the inspiration for her most important works while in residence.

The blessing and curse of *February House* is Tippins' thorough research. The credibility she ac-

quires via 25 pages of footnotes comes at the price of readability: her book generally unfolds like a master's thesis. This problem is compounded by the 60-plus years that have elapsed since Davis began his experiment. All the original residents of the house are now dead, eliminating the possibility of first-person interviews that would enliven the narrative.

The period of 1940-41 was one of great anxiety in the world at large, and on Middagh Street. Most of the male writers and composers were expatriates from England or Germany, dealing with complex issues of guilt and responsibility surrounding the war. When America finally entered the fray, the creative geniuses of Brooklyn Heights began to scatter around the globe. Talk and philosophy gave rise to action and, for better or



worse, that action produced change. *February House* casts an important light on troubling times, and how one group of artists handled the challenges of the era. ▼

Tim Miller

◀ Arts cover

California, crammed with the usual bohemian clutter of books and music, Miller sipped tea and said he couldn't imagine leaving California, the weather and his friends. His "half fox, and half wombat" dog Frieda lay sprawled on the floor. "Why anyone would want to put all of their social and human energy into stopping people's commitment is truly pathological," Miller said.

Miller's latest piece takes the audience on a meandering journey, far from the bureaucracy of gay marriage politics. He began producing material five years ago. "I was really interested in all this marriage equality, because I feel the 'smart' of it," he said. The first performance art piece he created about the subject, *Glory Box* (an Australian term for hope chest), dealt with the nuts and bolts of the process. The second time around, he wanted to get into the feeling of exile.

That voyage led him deep into his childhood. "All these little memories are the building blocks, how you receive your signals from your country that you actually don't belong," he said. "That's been loud and clear to me my entire life."

Gotta sing

To make his case, instead of straight political rhetoric, Miller found that his point of reference was of the song-and-dance variety. "I got led to musicals somehow," he said, "I didn't even plan on it, but these musicals really inspired me as a kid, gave me a sense of home and a sense of queer identity. Gave me a sense of political potential and radical politics."

Miller calls the musicals "the heartbeat" of his piece. He found that the most maligned of popular culture — "everyone loves to hate musicals" — most sharply skewers American society. From a commentary on interracial marriage in *South Pacific*, to a story about gay marriage in *Fiddler on the Roof*, to the first musical Miller saw as a child, 1976, which he describes as a depiction of the founding fathers as racist slave-owners and merchant capitalists, Miller uses musicals to connect the dots between his illusion and the reality of America.

"That becomes kind of the fun and the humor and the theatrical energy in the show," he said. Along



'Musicals inspired me as a kid, and gave me a sense of queer identity.'

the way, he punctuates his story with facts like, "We've invaded 103 countries in the last 100 years," or, "Half-a-million young Americans fled this country in the '60s." Miller explained his philosophy: "I cram it in quick in the show, just because I like reminding people."

This penchant for making waves is nothing new for Miller. He was one of four artists who lost their National Endowment for the

thinking that Mayor Newsom did one of the most interesting kind of conceptual performance-art pieces on the steps of City Hall last year," Miller said thoughtfully. "He just created this beautiful, durational performance of love, a great act of civil disobedience, but also there was an art component, partly because I knew that they would probably be torn up."

For now, Miller's personal battle is his piece of art, and he clings to the hope of a happy ending. In *Us*, it's a vision of his wedding day

with Alistair at Niagara Falls, the cliché location for honeymoons and marriages in the United States.

"Sadly, we live in a country that rips up people's marriage licenses! So it still is in the dream realm, I guess," he said.

Us by Tim Miller runs February 17-19, 8 p.m., at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum, 701 Mission St. For tickets (\$25 regular, \$23 seniors, \$19 YBCA members, students, teachers): (415) 978-ARTS, or www.ybca.org. ▼

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To Baghdad with love

'Oberon' has eerie contemporary echoes

by Tim Pfaff

If there's an opera in danger of falling off the radar, it's Carl Maria von Weber's *Oberon*, the composer's final opera, composed for Covent Garden in 1826, where it played to great success only months before his death. If there's a recording that could change all that, it's the first-ever CD release (Walhall) of a radio performance from Köln, Germany in September 1953. Odd that an opera widely deemed sunk by its silly libretto (as if there weren't ones as preposterous among the operas of Handel, Verdi, and Strauss) should resurface in 2005 as something like *The Magic Flute* meets CNN.

James Robinson Planché's fantastic fable is a far cry from Shakespeare's or Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, though it shares some of the characters. To repair a rift with his wife Titania, this Oberon must find lovers who remain constant through trial and temptation. He picks an unlikely hero, Hüon, who already has a price on his head for having killed Charlemagne's son over an insult. But given a nocturnal vision of Rezia, the daughter of the caliph of Baghdad (who is also given one of him, which seals their love, sight unseen, across psychic space), Hüon is dispatched – with just a magic horn and cup (you do

the symbol unpacking) – to kill the caliph's "left-hand man" and win Rezia away from her betrothed, whom she rightly loathes, for himself. True love, unnatural, saves the day.

If a heroic campaign to Baghdad for a little regime change based on magical thinking weren't enough, the story gains an extra dollop of currency during one of the pair's trials, post-shipwreck. In the opera's most enduring number (after its still-popular overture), Rezia declares, "These are but trials, surely, and though severe they be, will end in happiness." Then she lets rip with "Ocean, du Ungeheuer!" ("Ocean, thou mighty monster!"), an aria that ran through my mind the morning of the December Indian Ocean tsunami. ("When thou risest in thy wrath, as now, ... Then, Ocean, art thou terrible indeed.")

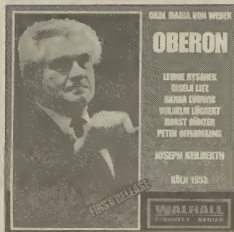
I'm not trying to suggest that the piece is ripe for a Peter Sellars staging. I merely commend it to the news-weary as the kind of heart-balm escape from reality only 19th-century German sentimental opera offers.

The reason I picked it up was not for the story, which I didn't know, but because it features Leonie Rysanek as Rezia, a role I hadn't known she sang – here a mere five years into her half-century career after her international debut in another Weber opera,

Der Freischütz. Probably half the people reading this heard this one-of-a-kind artist sometime during her long second career at San Francisco Opera, and will be knocked out by her radiant, transporting performance.

This is young Rysanek, but not "early" Rysanek. All the things that made her great – the big, plangent, soaring voice, never so happy as when on high, and the deeply felt characterization of every phrase of a complex, multifaceted role – are in full evidence. She unleashes an "Ocean, du Ungeheuer!" you can imagine turning back a real tsunami, yet with as much delicacy and fine-grained feeling as raw fury across the aria's long span.

Although she's the best member of the cast by a fair margin, she's surrounded by uniformly fine colleagues who perform in a style that has all but vanished from today's vocally homogenized



opera world. Worth singling out are her Hüon, Wilhelm Lückert, and soprano Gisela Litz, who sings her maid Fatima. Lückert's distinctive timbre ranges from undiluted power when called for to some absorbing head tones of the kind no tenor I know of since Jon Vickers has employed. Like the best German sopranos of her age, Litz combines pinpoint expression with a complex, full-bodied tone.

The performing version is a bit of a mystery, since it corresponds exactly to none of the *Oberon* librettos I have been able to find (the CD lacks even a synopsis, let alone a libretto). The ample passages of dialogue are delivered with the same passion and care as the musical numbers (and a few howler sound effects).

Yet in the end, what makes this a captivating experience is not its historical interest but the high quality of Weber's score, which elevates the text to theater music of real substance. There isn't a slack moment, and conductor Joseph Keilberth, in the finest work I have heard from him, leads singers, chorus, and orchestra through it all with a firm baton but subtle feeling for the idiom. For a performance more than a half-century old, the sound has clarity and depth. It's like salve you want to rub all over. ▼

Snow angels

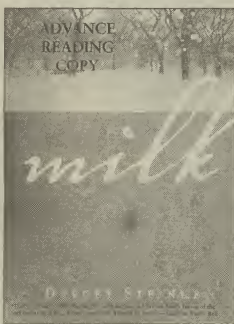
by Jim Piechota

Milk by Darcey Steinke; Bloomsbury, \$17.95

A disillusioned new mother, a gay priest, and a recently liberated monk are the collective engine powering Darcey Steinke's slim, heartfelt, Brooklyn-set fourth novel.

Mary, a woman who sees ethereal "sparks" dancing on her kitchen ceiling, is overjoyed and quite obsessed with her baby, though some semblance of a family life would be nice. Her aloof, puerile husband is having an affair and never seems to be around; and when he is, he's getting stoned and ignoring her. On quiet days, Mary either prays while locked in her closet, or she goes to visit her old college friend Walter, an Episcopalian minister at St. Paul's church. But Walter can't offer anything but stale jokes since his situation isn't much rosier.

After Walter's partner Carlos dies, he can't seem to shake his attraction to lanky, teenaged boys, even after the boy he'd been romancing in New York City gets



him banished from the parish there. Dates on Match.com, romps in strange beds and bars, and trolling in a chat room for "theologically minded adherents of S&M" make up Walter's world now. He laments: "That people you loved died was unacceptable; also, that people you fucked wanted you to vanish was unacceptable."

Suffocated by longing and loneliness, Mary starts having sex with John, a forlorn monk who has just left the monastery after 15 years, and therein shines a ray of

hope for her and her baby, though the sun never really appears in any part of this tightly-knit story.

The novel is stark, mystical, and moody throughout, but Steinke's writing is so lovely and spot-on descriptive that readers won't mind the gray skies her characters trundle beneath. The weather remains static, too. It is always snowing, whether "horizontally" in "half-hearted flurries" or "big as quarters." Wind-swept flakes "ticked like sugar granules on the window ledge." If all of this sounds like poetry in motion, it really is.

Steinke's powers of observation are heartbreakingly keen as well. Mary's attempt to passionately kiss her indifferent husband devolves into this: "A modicum of pressure was returned, but when she moved her tongue into his mouth, his teeth were a smooth hard line, and he turned his head."

After much success with past novels like the *New York Times*-recognized *Jesus Saves* and her debut triumph, *Suicide Blonde*, Darcey Steinke continues to ascend to literary heights with precious prose that shimmers like lyrical verse. ▼

Out There

◀ page 30

Wakefield Poole's *Boys in the Sand* (on the East Coast) and Peter Berlin's *Nights in Black Leather* (on the West Coast). The gay films had the same effect in our community as the straight one did in the mainstream, namely: The time for adult erotic film had simply, er, come!

• While we're following up on previous coverage in our colorful Arts & Entertainment section, a few OT readers wanted to know: What exactly does incoming SF Opera General Director David Gockley, he who so ably conducted the Newark Academy glee club back in the late '60s, look like today? Well, he looks a lot like this sporty gent, spotted styling an authentic SF Giants ballcap during his appointment-announcement press conference. He's so high/low cultchuh!



He's a big fan: Gockley

• Plus, how 'bout a follow-through on last week's meaty review of *The Selected Letters of Tennessee Williams*, Vol. II? Seems at one point during the negotiations for filming *A Streetcar*

Named Desire, author Lillian Hellman (*The Children's Hour*) was approached about writing the screenplay. She said that she could eliminate both the rape and the references to homosexuality without seriously hurting the story. Geez-Louise, Lillian ought've learned something from having her own work bowdlerized.

• Finally, just so you know we try to keep ourselves open to all experiences, we flipped through a copy of the *Position of the Day Playbook*, subtitled *Sex Every Day in Every Way*, from the editors of Nerve.com. Erm, make that sex every *hetero* way. Man-woman positions illustrated include "Down Boy," "Still Life with Penetration" and "The Foot in Mouth." But we still can't bring ourselves to describe "The Just Trust Me on This One," except to say it involves the ingenious use of a rocking chair. But just like a long-tailed cat, we'll keep way clear of that particular equipment. ▼

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THEATRE & MUSIC

Gender confusion

High-concept 'Othello' in Berkeley

by Richard Dodds

Suppose you recast Othello as a lesbian and no one noticed? That's close to what happens in Impact Theatre's production of the Shakespeare tragedy in Berkeley.

With a shaved head, bulging biceps, and a chest that suggests pecs rather than boobs, Skyler Cooper looks like a buff version of the singer Seal. It would be one thing if Cooper were playing Othello as a man — that's how the group Women's Will operates — but pronouns have been shifted from "he" to "she," even though Cooper doesn't here read as a woman.

Not until she opens her mouth, that is, when a startlingly light voice emerges (think Michael Jackson). But the voice, not only out of sync with the physical image, also undermines the

stature that needs to be established for this military hero. But after intermission, with passions ratcheting to a boil, Cooper does develop a vocal gravitas that lights a fire under the production, if once again making us forget we are supposed to be watching a female Othello.

Director Melissa Hillman has reset the play in a contemporary American military milieu, and booming rock music announces the scene changes. Of course, there are problems with logic when the characters find much reason to hold Othello's blackness against her, but don't bat an eye at her same-sex marriage to Desdemona.

Putting those concerns aside, the production doesn't do much to find new resonances with its modern setting and sexual twist. One exception is Casey Jackson's jokey performance as the villain Iago, a performance that reminded me, so help me, of smirky Ryan

Seacrest on *American Idol*.

Perhaps the best performance comes from Bernadette Quattrone as Emilia, Iago's wife and unwitting accomplice in destroying Othello. Quattrone somehow pulls off both a contemporary and Shakespearean performance, ideal for a high-concept production such as this, and her transformation from flighty wife to possessed avenger is impressive.

It's rather a motley crew that makes up the rest of the cast, with physical inappropriateness becoming something of a joke that even the production eventually acknowledges.

A final thought: Maybe they should rename the play *Othella*. ▼

Othello will run through March 19 at LaVal's Subterranean Theatre. Tickets are \$15. Call (510) 464-4468 or go to impacttheatre.com.



The buffed-up Skyler Cooper, as Othello, embraces her Desdemona.

Winter dance party

'Enter the Mowo' with Mocean Worker

by Gregg Shapiro

When the professional radio-announcer voice at the beginning of *Enter the Mowo!* (Hyena), the new album by Mocean [pronounced motion] Worker, says, "We now return you to the Mocean Worker album, which is already in progress," you get the feeling that he's not kid-



ding. With the background crowd noises suggesting a cross between a loft party and a jam-packed nightclub, and the fat, funky beats and David "Fathead" Newman's sax in the foreground on "Chick a Boom Boom Boom," you'll want to grab a drink, and find a dance partner with whom to swivel and grind. "Right Now" takes the effect of some of the recent Verve and Blue Note remix albums, and improves on it by crafting a new tune altogether. "I'll Take the Woods," a collaboration between Adam Dorn (aka Mocean Worker) and Ambrosia Parsley of Shiver, gives listeners the chance to catch their breath. Mocean Worker has a fondness for jazz riffs and performers, and pleasingly lifts a few, including Rahsaan Roland Kirk blowing some beautiful air into "Shamma Lamma Ding Dong" via a sample of his flute work, and the divine Nina Simone's dark-winged "Blackbird." Rising jazz diva Jane Monheit teams up with Mocean Worker on the appropriately named "Float," transporting us into the stratosphere.

I've been waiting a few years for the vibrant electro duo Lemon Jelly (Nick Franglen and Fred

Deakin) to resurface with a new disc, and they've done so with their latest full-length 64-95 (XL). A vintage rock sound is paired up with 21st-century electro beats on "88 AKA Come Down with Me," while "68 AKA Only Time" makes its rhythmic point through repetition broken up by an unexpected acoustic guitar and a deep and mysterious vocal. The eroticized beat of "93 AKA Don't Stop Now" comes with its own heavy breathing, and an updated dance rock feel permeates the suitably named "79 AKA The Shouty Track." "75 AKA Stay with You" presents a quick step that almost dares you to stay with it, and "76 AKA The Slow Train" chugs along at a good dance pace. Tart, yet refreshing to the last drop, album closer "64 AKA Go" features recent Golden Globe award-winner William Shatner on vocals.

Have you ever asked yourself what would qualify as a gay college party? DJ Seth Gold and Tony from gaycollegeparty.com seem to think they know the answer, and thus we have the various artists compilation *Gay College Party, Volume 1* (Centaur). With promise of more *Gay College Party* compilations to come, *Volume 1* presents a number of recent and retro dance-floor sensations in new, and sometimes completely faithful, cover versions. S.H.E.'s version of Kylie Minogue's "Love at First Sight" is such a near-exact copy that it smells like a ditto, while the cover of Mario Winans' "I Don't Wanna Know," complete with Enya's "Boadicea" melody line sample by Princess Paragon (a reference to gay novelist Robert Rodi?) differs from the original simply because of the female lead vocal. Simple Minds' "Don't You Forget About Me," which had its own life as a dance remix, is revisited by Belle Lawrence, and "To Sir with Love" gets dusted and given a fresh coat of techno paint in the version by Kelly Marie & Tina Charles. Even a song such as Travis' "Why Does It Always Rain On Me?" doesn't suffer too badly in its transition into super-charged dance track by

Ultima.

You'll have to ask the art department at the record label if the two comely women on the cover of the various artists compilation *Top Shelf: Dance Volume 1* (Koch) are supposed to be a queer couple or a tired and overused straight man's fantasy. As for the music on this compilation, I wouldn't be surprised to hear any of it played at one of the regular Chix Mix women's parties in Chicago, or anywhere else for that matter. Notable selections include the Bastone & Burnz club remix of "New York City" by the Peter Malick Group with vocals by Norah Jones, the DBA mix of "Just Look at You Now" by '80s synth-pop superstar Howard ("No One Is To Blame") Jones, Sander Kleinenberg's Cold Turkey Remix of Junkie XL's reggae-disco "Don't Wake Up Policeman," which samples Peter Tosh, ex-Exposed vocalist Gioia's "Be Mine," the club mix of Tim Deluxe's "It Just Won't Do," and Ian Pooley and Esthero's "Balmes." ▼

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OUT & ABOUT

Calendare by Mark Mardon



Tom Ammiano (top) and Doug Holsclaw (bottom) at the Rose

Back to the Rose

Twenty years ago the Valencia Rose, regarded by many as the birthplace of gay comedy, closed its doors. It had opened just a few years earlier. In January 1982 Hank Wilson and Ron Lanza turned a former funeral home into the happiest place in gay San Francisco. To commemorate that era, on Thursday, February 24, the San Francisco Public Library Main Branch will host a reading and discussion on gay comedy organized by the Hormel Center under the direction of Jim Van Buskirk. It will include a reading from comic genius Doug Holsclaw's book in progress: *A Little Light: Notes on Queer Theater*—a play on the phrase "a little light in their loafers," indicating a person of the gay persuasion. A panel discussion about the Rose will include Holsclaw in conversation with Supervisor Tom Ammiano (one of the most famous comics to emerge from the Rose), Karen Ripley, Ron Lanza and F. Allen Sawyer.

Holsclaw now teaches "Queer Theater" and "Stand-up Comedy" at UC Santa Cruz, and says in the comedy class "they're all straight boys, and I just tear them to shreds... in a loving way."

His history with the Valencia Rose began on Christmas 1982 when he picked up Ron Lanza in the bar Numbers on Fillmore Street. Soon after, at an audition at Theatre Rhinoceros, Ron said to him: "If you don't get this, we're doing a play over at the Rose."

Holsclaw did go to the Rose, where Lea DeLaria was directing *Street Theater* with Danny Williams and Suzy Berger.

"Lea was like, 'Doug, you should do stand up comedy.' I'd been an actor in NY and knew I was too nelly to make it as an actor, that's what my agent told me." But he couldn't be too nelly for the Rose.

Allen Sawyer was on stage the very first night the Rose opened, says Holsclaw, and after he and others jumped in, "we all became celebrities: Monica Palacios, Marga Gomez, Tom and all the rest." It was a revelation, because "I had never experienced being recognized for having a brain and a point of view. I had just been a little sex object."

Holsclaw took part in revues at the Rose including "Hissy Fit" and "Two Queen in Search of a Motif" (pictured above) with Tom Ammiano, who wanted to expand beyond stand up. In their two-person cabaret they played different characters in skits, and in one memorable scene for Holsclaw, very early in AIDS epidemic, they were at a memorial and got the giggles and couldn't stope laughing as they dished the dead. The subject matter, so immediate and personal to people, offered audiences a rare chance to laugh in the face of the plague.

The Rose didn't live long, and reincarnated as Josie's Juice Joint and Cabaret. Holsclaw moved on to play a leading role in Theatre Rhinoceros management, playwrighting and acting for 18 years.

The Valencia Rose Revisited takes place Thursday, February 24, at 6 p.m. in the Latino Hispanic Community Meeting Room, Public Library Main Branch 100 Larkin St. ▼

David Alan Moss and Keith Cox perform in Central Works' new play *Enemy Combatant* at Berkeley City Club. See Friday.

Fri 18

Enemy Combatant @ Berkeley City Club

Opening night: Central Works presents *Enemy Combatant*, the story of an American traitor. Taking the case of John Walker Lindh, the so-called "American Taliban" as its point of departure, the play, written and directed by Gary Graves, features Keith Cox, David Alan Moss and Jan Zvaifler. \$9-\$25 sliding. 8pm Thu., Fri. & Sat.; 5pm Sun. Runs Feb. 19-March 26. Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Ave., Berkeley. Tix: 510-558-1381.

'Bear Walk' @ The LAB

In conjunction with the current exhibit, "Hairy Bodies," The LAB presents "Bear Walk," a reception for the exhibiting artists and a presentation of Nick Dong's jewelry on live hairy bodies! Dong's handcrafted metal objects are both elegant and absurd, with decadent and obscure utilitarian functions that open discussions and convey concerns for our culture and living condition. Free. 6-9pm. The LAB, 2948 16th St. at Capp. Info: 415-864-8855; www.thebab.org

FAMILY JEWELS—The Making of Veronica Klaus @ EXIT Theater

World Premiere/Special Limited Engagement—12 Performances: Steinbeck Presents Family Jewels—The Making of Veronica Klaus. Co-created and directed by Jeffrey Hartgraves. Family Jewels tells all the juicy details of Veronica's metamorphosis from husky Midwestern boy to voluptuous Chanteuse. With plenty of scandalous stories, hilarious anecdotes, and of course some wonderful music! Says Veronica: "We are in the last stages of production for my new CD *Live At The Lodge!* With 13 tracks all recorded live a few months ago at a benefit for the Rainbow World Fund, it's a great collection of Cabaret, Jazz, Pop and Blues." The CD will be out during the run of *Family Jewels* at the theater. \$20 Adult; \$18 Senior; \$17 Theatre Bay Area. 8pm showtime. Runs Thu., Fri. & Sat., Feb. 17-March 12. EXIT Theater, 156 Eddy St. at Mason. Tix: 866-811-4111 or 415-820-1565; www.steinbeckpresents.org

Jessica Hagedorn's Stairway to Heaven @ Intersection

Now playing: *Stairway To Heaven* by nationally acclaimed novelist, poet, multimedia performance artist and playwright Jessica Hagedorn. Directed by Nancy Benjamin. Featuring: Catherine Castellanos, Margo Hall, Tina Huang, Luis Saguar and Sean San José. Movement Direction by Erika Chong Shuch. Set in San Francisco's Tenderloin District, *Stairway to Heaven* weaves the lives and memories of social outsiders: a homeless vet and the woman who takes him in, a strip club owner, an exotic dancer and speed freak-wrestling with their dreams and realities. Written specifically for Campo Santo + Intersection, this is Hagedorn's first play since *Dogeaters*, which opened to national acclaim at New York City's Public Theatre in 2001. This project also marks the return of Jessica Hagedorn to the Bay Area and to Intersection, where she created

many of her earliest performances in the 1970s and 1980s. Runs thru March 7, Thu.-Sun., 8pm. Actor's Benefit performance: Monday, March 7. \$9-15 (your choice) sliding scale. Thursdays & Actors Benefit are Pay What You Can. Intersection for the Arts, 446 Valencia St. (btwn 15/16). Reservations: (415) 626-3311; www.theintersection.org

Tim Miller's Us @ YBCA Forum

Performance artist Tim Miller's new solo piece, *Us*, covers a broad spectrum of subject matter from Miller's love affair since childhood with Broadway musicals, to his exploration of home, exile and the injustices lesbian and gay people face in the good ol' USA. \$25 regular; \$23 senior; \$19 YBCA members, students, teachers. 8pm Thu.-Sat., Feb. 17-19. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum, 701 Mission St. at 3rd St. Info/tix: 415-978-ARTS (2877); www.ybca.org

Femina Potens' "Sizzle"

The "Sizzle" is back, a monthly night of open mic erotica, erotic film screenings, burlesque, drag performances, spoken word, music, and hip hop. This installment of *Sizzle* features Sugar High Glitter City along with spoken word performance by Suzy LaFollette and Andrea Gibson from Flagstaff Arizona, Scott Turner from Georgia, music by Chris Pureka, and burlesque by Big Bottom Burlesque and last but not least an erotica open mic. Come read the smuttiest of the smutt on Feb. 18 at 8pm at Femina Potens, 465 South Van Ness. \$5 at door (NOTAFLÖF). Info: www.femnapotens.com

Food Fit for a Queen

Under One Roof host their annual fancy food sale, "Food Fit for a Queen", at Under One Roof has acquired 30 pallets of donated gourmet food items from the Fancy Food

The Dairy Queen Hits the U.K., oil on panel by David Lyle, part of *Fame*, opening Sat., Feb. 19 with a reception 5-7 p.m. at Heather Marx Gallery, 77 Geary St. Call 415-627-9111.

Show held earlier this month at Moscone Center. Don't miss this popular event! The sale location is between the Detour Bar and Copy Central. Ample parking nearby. Especially lazy queens can pull their cars up to load! Sale hours are 10am-8pm, Feb. 18-21. Under One Roof, 2344 Market St.

Denise Perrier

@ Pan Pacific Hotel

Denise Perrier performs to benefit Tin Pan Alley Productions. Perrier has worked with the late "Satchmo", been the lead vocalist with the Intervals, and is one of the greatest interpreters of Duke Ellington and Jimmy McHugh. \$25 plus two drink minimum. Feb. 18. Doors open 7:30pm; Show at 8:30pm. Pan Pacific Hotel, 500 Post St. at Mason. Tix: Call Stu at 415-923-1452 or email Susmith97@aol.com

James Tiptree Award

Anthology @ ADL Bookstore

Reading with contributors to *The James Tiptree Award Anthology 1* of speculative fiction that explores and expands gender roles. Participants: Karen Joy Fowler, Paty Murphy, and Debbie Notkin. Free. 7pm. A Different Light Bookstore, 489 Castro St. Info: 415-431-0891; www.adlbooks.com

Tracks @ Jon Sims Center

Jon Sims Center for the Arts presents Tracks, curated by Alma Esperanza Cunningham. Featured Dance Companies: Maxine Moerman Dance Theatre (SF), Trajal Harrell Dance Style (NY), and Keity Anjoure (Paris). \$10-\$20 sliding. Feb. 18 & 19 at 8pm. 1519 Mission St. (btwn 11th St. & So. Van Ness). Info: 415-554-0402; www.jonsimsctr.org

Sat 19

Not About Nightingales

@ Theatre Rhino Studio

Opening night: The Studio at Theatre Rhinoceros presents *Not About Nightingales* by Tennessee Williams. Written in 1938 and based upon a newspaper story, the play follows the events of a prison atrocity, which shocked the nation: prisoners leading a hunger strike were locked in a steam-heated cell and roasted to death. A political piece of theatre about social injustice. Featuring: Floriana Alessandria, David Bicha, Pete Caslavka, Bart Foley, Paul Hammonds, Cheree A. Sager, Wilton Yeung. John Fisher, Director. Erik Flatmo, Scenic Designer; davidmahr, Sound Designer; Melissa Ososke, Stage Manager; Dave Robertson, Lighting Designer. Opens Sat., Feb. 19 and runs thru March 13. 8pm Wed.-Sat.; 3 & 7pm Sun. The Rhino, 2926 16th St. Tix: 415-861-5079; www.therhino.org

Imperial Coronation

@ Gift Center Pavilion

The Imperial Council of San Francisco, Inc. presents Coronation 2005, marking "39 Years of History and Tradition—An Imperial Family Celebration," presided over by Emperor Fernando and Empress China Silk. The doors open at 5pm; celebration kicks off at 6pm. Tickets are \$55 (celebration seating) and \$45 (history seating) per person. Show on Sat., Feb. 19 at the Gift Center Pavilion at 888 Brannan St. Tix: Marlena's, 488 Hayes St. Call 415-864-6672; email marlenaxx@sbcglobal.net

Lesbian/Gay Contra Dance

@ Women's Bldg.

Contra is an exuberant bounciness that's easy to learn and very beginner friendly! No partner, special attire or experience required. Mavis McGaugh calls to the live music of the Repercussions. \$10 (or pay what you can). 8-10:30pm (doors open 7:45pm). The Women's Bldg., 3543 18th St. (btwn Guerrero & Valencia). Info: www.lcfd.org/sf/

Ain't It So

@ The Next Stage

Opening Night: West Coast Premiere celebrating Black History Month: CJ Productions presents *Ain't It So*, by Charles Johnson. Pay what you can previews. Opens Feb.



Portrait of Vicki Marlene by Sara O'Sullivan, part of "The Pink Show" at Creativity Explored. See Thursday.

19 & runs thru March 5 (Previews Feb. 17 & 18). The Next Stage, 1620 Gough St. (at Bush). Tix/info: 415-333-6389.

The Kinsey Sicks

@ Int'l Bear Rendezvous
The Kinseys return for their 4th appearance at the International Bear Rendezvous. The performance is at 8pm at the Ramada Plaza Hotel, 1231 Market Street, and is open to registered Bears. Info: www.bosf.org; www.kinseysicks.com

Black LGBT Film Festival (Day One) @ Main Library

"The 4th Annual Black Coalition on AIDS, GLBT Film Festival," presented by The Black Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Advisory Council of the Black Coalition on AIDS, along with the African American Center, and the James C. Harnett Gay and Lesbian Center of the SF Public Library. Two films will be shown. All are welcome to attend. Admission is free, 12 noon-5pm. Also on Sun, Feb. 20. SF Public Library, Main Branch, 100 Larkin St., Koret Auditorium. Info: sfplib.ca.us

Sun 20

Thomas Waugh's Lust Unearthed @ GLBT Historical Society

Book launch: Thomas Waugh unveils *Lust Unearthed: Vintage Gay Graphics From the Dubeck Collection*. An educational talk with naughty slides. Free. 2-4pm. GLBT Historical Society, 657 Mission St., Suite 300. Info: 415-777-5455; www.glbthistory.org

Music in the Miskan @ Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav (CSZ) presents the Sixth Annual "Music in the Miskan" Jewish Concert Series — Jewish Chamber Music Performed by Local Gay Musicians. The 6th season of CSZ's chamber music concert series kicks off with The Bridge Trio (Randall Weiss, violin, Natalia Ver-shilova, viola, and Victoria Ehrlich, cello) in "Triple Play" Serenade for String Trio by Ernst von Dohnanyi; Passacaglia, Fugue & Dance by Hans Krasa; Serenade, Opus 8 by Ludwig von Beethoven. This concert series continues on March 13 and May 8. A wine and cheese reception follows. CSZ Members: \$15 donation; Non-members: \$18 donation. Sunday, Feb. 20, at 4pm, at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 290 Dolores St. (at 16th St.). Info: 415-861-6932; www.shaarzahav.org

'L Word' Premiere Party @ Studio Z

"L Word" Season Premiere Screening Party. Join in the fun and support the Lyon Martin Women's Health Clinic. Glimpse screen for watching "L Word." Dancing with DJ Atomicpop follows the screening. Featured Guests: Assemblyman Mark Leno and Leslie Ewing, Lyon Martin Women's Health Clinic. Drink specials and complimentary appetizers by Chef Andrea Pinto. Door prizes, free giveaway items and raffle. Items donated by Babe's in Toy Land. \$5 \$7 sliding. Sunday, February 20th 8pm doors; 8:30pm welcome & introductions; 9pm screening of "L Word." Produced by WetLand Productions / Kary McElroy. 21+ with ID. Studio Z 2314 11th St. (11th & Folsom). Info: www.studioz.tv

SF Hiking Club

@ Donner Canyon Falls

This picturesque loop leads through flowery meadows up to the rugged north face of Mt. Diablo where, with any luck, the waterfalls will be gushing. It's a moderate 7-mile hike with a 1,100-ft. elevation gain. Meet 9am under the large Safeway sign at Market & Dolores. Info: www.sfhiking.com

Mon 21

Sex Workers Art Show @ Cafe Du Nord

Sex Workers Art Show tour. An eye-popping evening of visual & performance art created by people in the sex industry. Performers include Ben McCoy, a 4-inch stiletto-heeled pointy-toed scantily-clad iconoclast fighting the hetero-normative privilege-principle with a tongue as sharp as his high heels; Miss Satanica, a full-fledged sex goddess, burlesque performer; and circus sideshow diva of danger; Tre Vasquez, two spirit, former ho, down for reclaiming histories and spiritual wellness through hip hop; and many others. Visual artists include James Diamond, a director, producer, writer and mentor in multimedia whose films include *Outline*, written and produced in 1997 when he was gay. \$10. Mon., Feb. 21. Doors at 8pm, show 9pm. 21+ w/ID. Cafe Du Nord, 2170 Market St. Info/tix: www.cafedunord.com; www.sexworker-artshow.com

Tue 22

Drug Crimes Forum

@ Women's Bldg.

The Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club presents a forum on "Progressive Solutions to Drug Crimes in San Francisco." Panelists: District Attorney Kamala Harris and Public Defender Jeff Adachi. Moderator: Milk Club President Greg Shaw. What are the effective and compassionate solutions for drug crimes in SF? Forum takes place 7-8pm on Feb. 22 at Women's Building, 3543 18th St. (btwn Valencia/Guerrero), 2nd floor. Info: www.milkclub.org

OUT Spoken

@ Comcast Ch. 11

Comcast's OUT Spoken, the LGBT video magazine, airs Episode IV — "One Wedding and a Revolution, The Right to Marry." Executive Producer Tim Gaskin. Producer: Erick Baze. Aired at 6:30pm Feb. 22. Encore presentations on Feb. 23 at 8:30pm; Feb. 26 at 7pm; and Feb. 27 at 8pm.

Wed 23

Gay Adult Film Fest @ Nob Hill Adult Theatre

'Nob Hill Adult Theatre, the nation's premier theatrical adult environment, will present a first-ever gay adult film festival running on four concurrent nights, Wed., Feb. 23-26. Contributions from all quarters of gay adult motion media. Wakefield Poole, legendary director of "Boys in the Sand" and "Bijou", headlines the event. Tributes to a Bay Area adult post-production collec-

tive, a world premiere adult video, and gay anime are highlights. General Manager Timothy Plantikow says: "Before it's all said and done we'll have amateurs dancing beside porn stars and cartoon men kissing each other." Tickets for the festival can be purchased at Nob Hill Theatre, 729 Bush Street at Powell. Regular admission for each night is \$30. Thursday and Saturday night admission will be \$40 after 6pm. Theaters can purchase \$20 discount tickets between 9 am and noon for each evening's entertainment. Only those over 18 years of age may attend. Info: nobhilltheatre.com

Enorchestra @ Cafe Du Nord

Noise Pop 2005 presents Enorchestra, With big ol' buckets full of love and respect for the original album, Doug Hilsinger (Eagle Tavern) and Caroleen Beatty have created a faithful, organic, and rocking re-imagining of every song from Brian Eno's 1974 experimental masterpiece, 'Taking Tiger Mountain (by Strategy)'. Featuring Beatty's soulful voice, combined with Hilsinger's colorful production (he plays all the instruments himself, using no synths or samplers). \$10. 8pm doors; 9pm show. 21+ w/ID. Cafe Du Nord, 2170 Market St.

Will Franken @ The Marsh

The Marsh presents comic genius Will Franken in *All Right Then, I'll Go To Hell!* Expect "embedded pointed social satire in a refreshingly cerebral form reminiscent of a Monty Python's Flying Circus episode. \$8-\$12 sliding. 8pm. Also on April 20. The Marsh, 1062 Valencia St. (btwn 21st & 22nd sts). Tix: 415-826-5750; www.ticketweb.com. Info: www.themarsh.org

Killing My Lobster Kabaret @ Make Out Room

An ongoing monthly Kabaret showcasing comedians, musicians, story-tellers, filmmakers, and the occasional weirdo show. A benefit for the Coalition on Homelessness presented by the Lobster Theater Project, a Bay Area nonprofit theater and film production company. Performing this month: Rafe Gabel, Yo-Yo Champion Doctor Poplar, Ian Shaul. \$5. 8-10pm. Last Wed. of every month. Info: www.killingmylobster.com

Beginners Taekwon Do @ The Center

Triangle Martial Arts Association's Triangle Taekwon Do Club offers "Beginners Triangle Taekwon Do," a weekly class for students with less than one year experience in TKD or any other discipline. Newcomers and spectators welcome. \$30 introductory membership provides uniform and up to two months of training. Friendly, supportive, and qualified instruction. Offering affordable martial arts and self-defense instruction primarily focused on the LGBTQQ, inner-city youth, low income, disabled, and elderly, whilst welcoming everyone equally. 7:30pm-9:30pm in the Rainbow Room, SF LGBT Community Center, 1800 Market St. Info: 415-495-1888; www.triangletkd.org

Thu 24

The Pink Show @ Creativity Explored Gallery

Opening reception: The Pink Show. More than 25 artists with developmental disabilities at Creativity Explored rethink pink in an exhibition of their work. John Patrick McKenzie offers an ode to playful color in a series of text-based drawings; Marcus Cortez redefines macho with his paintings of pink motorcycles; Sara O'Sullivan picks up the pink triangle theme with a spectacular series of drag queen portraits including such local luminaries as Christy Cruz and the legendary Vicki Marlene. All artwork is for sale. Reception on Thu., Feb. 24 from 7-9pm. Show runs Feb. 24-April 7, Mon.-Fri., 10am-3pm, Sat. 1-6pm. Creativity Explored Gallery, 3245 16th St. (at Guerrero). Info: 415-863-2108; www.creativity-explored.org

Best Lesbian Erotica @ A Different Light Bookstore

Join contributors Shannon Cummings and Jean Roberts, plus guest judge Felice Newman, as they read from the 10th anniversary edition of *Best Lesbian Erotica* on Thu., Feb. 24 at 7pm. A Different Light Bookstore, 489 Castro St. Info: 415-431-0891; www.adlbooks.com

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Fist among equals

Penetrating insights into 'Fisticuffs' & 'The Road to Temptation'

by John F. Karr

There's neither boxing nor fighting in *Fisticuffs*, but the title does contain the word fist. Might as well have called it *Fistula*, although that doesn't have quite the same ring. Whatever it's called, *Fisticuffs* will be self-recommending to fisting fans. It presents Rik Jammer, an underused but savory talent, in three scenes, showcasing him most effectively as both top and bottom. It throws in overhung Mario Ortiz; a mammoth-cocked and very handsome black man, Cutter X; plus daddy-ish Christophe Benoit. All three

shower their attentions upon two compellingly receptive boys. Cutie blond Billy Cochran makes his debut in two scenes, while dirty blond Nick Savage, who appeared without making any waves in four movies for Studio 2000 in 1999, has only recently returned to film after a few years off to demonstrate a previously unknown and remarkable affinity for dildos and fists.

Billy Cochran looks like a clone at first, but is transformed as the clothes come off. His latent butch attitude ratchets up as his unique tattoos and multiple piercings are revealed, causing Jammer to murmur, "You're a regular piece of work, Billy." A bit too much for me — there's so much heavily weighted metal riddling his cock in strange places that it clatters when he beats off. Yet there's no questioning his attractiveness, passion, and eager ability. It's pret-



ty exciting when he squats on Jammer's fist and rides vigorously while jacking his cock. After several duo pairings, a slightly extended finale presents a quartet, with Jammer and Savage bottoming side by side, and then Savage doing a really good job on Jammer.

So, a good movie. But director Wolfgang Bang seems out of his element tackling the Club Inferno style laid out some time ago by Chris Ward. In making a move from the quasi-amateur mode of his *Handpacked* trilogy to a more professional package, he's lost the rawness that was his most essential quality. The striking reality quotient has been replaced by fake-looking porno-lard sets, and worse, scenarios. The bartender picks up a customer; the boss promises a promotion if the clerk will put out. In one scene, there's even the sorry pretense of Billy being straight. How sad — the dialogue in Bang's movies used to be the guys' actual talk, not this porno-poop. The lighting is too frequently subpar, and although the movie is 100 minutes, several scenes feel truncated. Why not a full two hours? Bang misses opportunity. Jammer's thumb-sized nipples cry out

for tit clamps, and anyone who's seen Savage's two other recent excursions will know that, effective as he is here, only the merest surface of his talent is being scratched. It's worth a month's membership to join HotHouse.com, where lots of Hot House goodies are available, and where you can also tune into Chi Chi LaRue's *Live and Raw* webcam, and watch the two amazing live solo shows Savage has put on. If only they'd be released on DVD.

Piece of the rock

I have no hesitation in recommending director Steven Scarborough's mainstream effort, *The Road to Temptation*. It's the confident, quiet but potent masculinity of Arpad Miklas that typifies *Road*.

This hairy guy's superbly handsome, and has thrilling hip-thrusting technique with which he wields his elongated pylon of cock. And, like the Rock of Gibraltar, he's There. Not broadcasting a persona, not acting-out masculinity for the camera. Just being masculine.

Scarborough's movie-making mirrors this strength. The music's swell, the videography is filled with light and air, and a summery warmth suffuses the scenes. Scarborough's encouraged his men to sustain this mood, and they make out slowly, deeply, before fucking with strength and abandon. They never seem to be making porn. They're just having really good mansex. Certainly, Fredrick Ford stands out with Arpad Miklos, as does Ricky Martinez with Tag Adams. Ricky is first seen engaging in his self-suck specialty. He licks and kisses and nibbles the head of his dick, but what transmits even more sensation, to this viewer at least, is the way he munches on his foreskin. Imagine the feeling! Too bad he ends his swell fuck with Adams by calling



him his bitch. It's bad enough that rappers have popularized the word's usage. Its misogyny has no place in gay porn.

The movie's unobtrusively told story is of Kenny, played most winningly by Corbin Michaels. Kenny's kicked out of his home for being gay, but finds refuge in the rural paradise of Temptation Ranch, where the dudes spend the day dallying with each other. The kid's shy, of course, but blossoms when drawn into the proceedings. And there's a lot to blossom on Michaels, whose chunky dick is on a par with thick thighs and solid torso. He's so yummy that everyone here — stars like Kent Larson, Alex LeMonde and Joshua Adams — eat him right up. And Michaels eats right back, and bounces in happy Reverse Cowboys, and fucks with a kid's ferocity.

Proceedings are so uniformly excellent that at 99 minutes, with five regulation 20-minute scenes, the movie's too short. Why does the editor begrudge us a full two hours? There's an excellent bonus scene on disc two, with Carlos Morales riding a fat red dildo as well as butch buddy Josh Kole. But it coulda been right in the movie. Hot House has admitted that the future's arrived — from now on, they're chucking VHS and will go DVD only. The shape of movies should change accordingly. www.HotHouse.com ▼

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MUSIC

Truly independent

Garrin Benfield's mesmerizing playing wowed a hard-core crowd last Thursday night at a Bread and Roses Community Concert he shared with Spencer Day and JP Cutler. Day's 10-piece all-star jazz orchestra drew the big crowd to The Independent, but for those who stayed late (about a third of the audience), it was Benfield who carried the night. Yes, Day was magnificently entertaining, and did extraordinary renderings of songs we've all come to love, such as an extended version of "Arizona Blue." He and the hilarious Gerri Lawlor were full of buoyant energy and playful high jinks, but the sound mixing was ungainly, causing some raggedness in the fun. It was a cramped space for such a large ambition. He'll pull it off eventually, I suspect at Symphony Hall, maybe with k.d. lang!

Benfield had the tighter, more energetic, more artful set. He's an old pro, has toured relentlessly, and is more focused. That he's a queer, anti-war, pro-peace rocker with a hippy-ish following may not endear him to the gay mainstream, but serious guitar lovers know he's a maestro. He's long ranked tops in the local singer/songwriter scene; now make that rock scene, period. That's what he proved at The Independent, showcasing not only intricately orchestrated, adrenaline-fueled versions of songs off his album *Where Joy Kills Sorrow*, but outrageously beautiful covers of Joni Mitchell and Radiohead songs. He got solid support from his mates, Russ Gold on drums (easily a match for Day's Scott Amendola) and Joshua Zucker on bass.

Always the activist, look for Benfield to make an appearance at the March 19 anti-war rally in Dolores Park. Catch Spencer Day at his best, with his tight band, playing March 2, 16 & 30 at Bruno's, and Feb. 25 & 28 at The Pan Pacific Hotel. ▼ — Mark Mardon



Pendulum swings with hip hop

'In the Bars' visits a longtime Castro institution

by Mike Sher and Mark des Jardins

For men of color, The Pendulum, located at 4146 18th Street west of Castro Street, has been a haven in what some men of color believe to be a sea of indifference or hostility in the Castro. As the N'Touch has been a favorite hangout for Asians, the Pendulum has been one for black gay men and others for over 30 years. In the past, this has meant mainly black gay men, but now the Latin gay scene is also surfacing at the bar.

It's sad to think about it, but just because a person is gay doesn't mean that he's escaped the prejudices with which he grew up. Many transplants to the Castro in the old days were Dixie types from the South who brought their negative feelings towards blacks with them. In the old Castro, black gay men would sometimes have to wait far beyond the expected length of time for a bartender to fill their order. Multiple IDs would often be required at the door. Racism or not, it is a fact that the residents of the Castro were predominantly white back then. Men of color found the Pendulum a shelter in a storm.

Until Dec. 1 last year, the Pen-

dulum was the oldest privately-owned sole-proprietorship gay bar in the city. The bar name is 35 years old, and was the Honey Bucket before that. Trelawny J. Bruce, the new owner, plans a remodeling, but unlike the Badlands across the street, the bar will stay open during renovation. The work will be done starting in Spring 2005, a little at a time, and business will continue during alterations.

Bar backs

The bar itself is large and square, with squared corners and a Formica top. Two-dozen barstools surround the bar, some with backs.

Next to the bar near the front door, a small dance area shows distinctly. Weekends, this will be packed. When smoking in bars was banned, the Pendulum opened up its patio in the back. During the summer season, this is a favorite spot after Sunday brunch for chums to share company and cocktails.

We spoke with Berin Nakamura, the longest employed staff member, and both a bartender and the manager. He tells us the bar is a tranquil neighborhood bar during the week, but draws a wildly mixed crowd on weekends. Daytime bartenders could be Buddy, a cordial young black man, or Francisco. Evenings, Margarita,



Berin Nakamura and Enrique Jimenez are popular bartenders at the Pendulum, which is slated for a face-lift.

a lesbian, Enrique, Latin, and Berin fill the customer beverage orders. They do not serve blender drinks. If you order one, expect it served on the rocks.

On Sundays at 8 p.m., La Cantina is offered, including a Latin drag show with a touch of soul. With Francisco and Enrique bartenders, more Latin and Asian customers are coming to the bar. And with Margarita, more women, too.

For three years, the dance floor has been one of just a very few in the 'Stro. DJs serve up hip-hop on Friday and Saturday starting at 10 p.m. The DJ station is small and

modest, located in a small corner not visible from the dance floor. The fragments of melody and rhythms from older recordings, combined with rap, funk and wild sounds popular in the '80s, draw young gays of all backgrounds on weekends. The staff and new owner (he likes to be called TJ) like this new young crowd — an evolution from the Castro to a Castro of color.

This will be the first face-lift at the Pendulum in 10 years. TJ wants to give the bar a new look for its younger faces and by offering more of the new beat. Their energy gives hope that the new Castro will be

the heart of the city itself.

On weekdays until 7:30 p.m., the bar offers Happy Hour rates of \$2.25 for domestic beer and \$3 on well drinks. There are daily specials. Friday and Saturday, hip-hop starts at 10 p.m.

So if you're interested in a diverse crowd of different ages, genders and ethnic backgrounds, then the Pendulum could be your spot. If you go there, tell them you read about them in the B.A.R. ▼

The Pendulum, 4146 18th Street, San Francisco. (415) 863-4441 Open Noon-2 a.m.

John Rechy

◀ Arts cover

taught in college Chicano Studies classes, many of them still in print in foreign languages. Even *Le Monde*, he said, recently stated that *City* has not aged a bit.

Rechy, the author of 12 novels, believes that the "myth of Stonewall" damages pre-'69 writers (Radclyffe Hall, William Burroughs, Richard Meeker of '33's *Better Angel*) who "possess more insurrectionary power and defiance" than today's "misguided canon," with its tortured gay men chasing straight guys, "rampaging sadists violating the objects of their lust."

One cannot blame the thin-skinned Rechy for his flintiness. He imagines himself among the pre-Stonewall risk-takers, and still waves LA's lavender flag while sponsoring young writers in his USA Creative Writing Professorship.

Before and after

Juan Francisco Rechy, born in '31, declares allegiance with Southside pachucos over cowboy-booted, Anglo youths with clean switchblades, in impressionistic snippets describing his decadent El Paso hometown. He recalls knocking on poet Robinson Jeffers' Carmel door at age 21; he writes of accepting the PEN Lifetime Achievement Award at the same fancy hotel where a house detective kicked him out for hustling friends before.

He leads an almost surreal slide-show tour through eroticized Pershing Square and Hollywood Boulevard, portraying stud-hustlers, young punks, handsome vagrants and lonesome fruits among the strip movies and live-flesh shows. "Pretty girls and boys turn brown in the hazy sun, lazily

rotting like mangos, but they don't know it," he writes of starstruck Hollywood pilgrims.

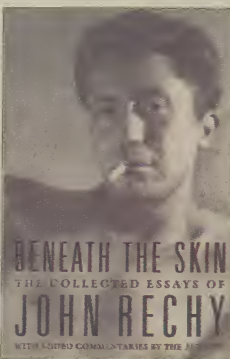
His political essays span 40 years, beginning with a *Nation* magazine series on Vietnam-era soldiers' acts of dignified dissent: posting anti-war leaflets, staging a chapel meditation, seeking permission to hold a service honoring the war dead, a scapegoated soldier sentenced to the brig for joining a peace march while career officers displayed Vietcong ears.

Post 9/11, he questions war-profiteering, military tribunals, executions, Elton John's all-purpose *Candle in the Wind*, a cosmetic surgery ad — "Face the world bravely, with a new face" — and propaganda repeatedly asserting Bush's victories while ensuring his maniacal policies.

He invokes Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil" when Bush comforts the parents of untrained, fallen GIs, but prohibits photos of their coffins; while subdued Democrats watch Bush trample civil rights, "standing quietly by like good Germans." Iraq's oil wells protected; Halliburton war contracts; gaunt prisoners hooded and leashed: all here.

He targets Tom Cruise's \$100 million libel lawsuit for an allegation of homosexuality, and a faith-healing televangelist, his wife's hair "yellow wedding cake melting in the sun." He chronicles abuse and rape at a Texas Juvenile Detention Home; the craven Catholic Church's carnal repression ensuring inevitable child abuse; Anita Bryant's Dade County initiative while voters sported "Kill a Queer for Christ" bumper stickers; and tells Masters and Johnson that we did not leave the closet to be thrust into labs.

A survey of what he calls "straight films in drag" includes *Midnight Express*' romantically lit nude-dungeon shower scene. He



calls Mart Crowley's *The Boys in the Band* truthful, compassionate, daring, and sympathetic for its

time, and defends William Friedkin's right to film '79's *Cruising* when protesters labeled him a traitor for attempting to restrain what he saw as their violent message.

Our man in LA denounced the '70s mainstream-press blackout of gay issues; harassed, interrogated, entrapped lives destroyed; sex arrests resulting in suicides and registration for life as sex offenders.

In 1973, a full-scale Griffith Park military operation with helicopter, command post, detention busses, and mounted police netted hundreds of gay men. It was the setting where his Johnny Rio of *Numbers* compulsively counted his tricks. Today, we would suggest Rio join a sex-addicts' 12-step group.

The life-long weightlifter par-

allels "sleazy and alluring, cheery and elegant, hypocritical and honest" bodybuilding with gay theater's sequined drag.

His book reviews give Rechy a chance to recall rebuffing the attempted seductions by Christopher Isherwood, noting his 400 sex partners and anti-Semitism; and a Liberace dinner party, with the bejeweled pianist's fingers on his fly under the table.

He recounts the moment when athletic, seducible Jack Kerouac first eyed Neil Cassady's cock; recalls Bukowski's hardy, agitating 70-year LA voice; and portrays two young brothers binding and savagely torturing to death the kind and generous-to-hustlers Ramon Navarro, who'd praised his murderer's star power to a publicist. ▼

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Heart of America Leather weekend in Kansas City had no contestants for Mr. or Ms. and Leather Girl, so Dale Rush (third from left) agreed to take it on for another year and advances to ABW in April. Kneeling is Heart of America Leather boy Ryan Setzkorn with the ABW 2004 winners, Beth, Storm, Robert and Terry.

Bears & royals, oh my!

A blockbuster gay weekend in SF

by Mister Marcus

Leather folks and bears from one end of the country to the other will be besieged this coming weekend, as the leather calendar appears to have something for everyone scheduled from Philadelphia to San Francisco with Chicago in between.

The Imperial Coronation of the emperor and empress of San Francisco will take place on Saturday night, February 19. The voting took place last Saturday and frankly, the corner of 18th & Castro St. was an ordeal. On all four corners, supporters of the candidates were there en masse with bullhorns and outrageous costumes pushing their candidates. This cacophony and congestion did absolutely not amuse the local populace and the merchants. Just crossing the street in any direction was an ordeal within yards of the voting site in the Magnet office.

Bears from around the world will converge on San Francisco from all over the world for International Mr. Bear weekend with at least a dozen events. In addition to all this, the Inter-Club Fund's annual Motorcycle Awards on Saturday night draws bike club people from all over the state.

In Chicago, the world-famous Cell Block states their annual Mr. CellBlock Leather competition on Saturday night and the Pantheon of Leather awards ceremony takes place with the selection of Mr. and

Ms. Olympus Leather being chosen. A "Burning the Mortgage" ceremony takes place on Sunday afternoon at the Leather Archives & Museum on Chicago's North Side, attesting to the support given this sacred institution from leather people around the world. The museum is now absolutely ours and thanks for your fundraising and contributions to make it a reality.

In Philadelphia, Heather "Pandora" Purvin and Victor Falero step aside for the new Mr. and Ms. Philadelphia Leather competition weekend. Jimmy Madden, owner of the Bike Stop, has given the contest to a committee and Ryan Goldner has a big hand in this production, so seriousness and much camp will be the order of the weekend in Philly.

In Los Angeles, the Regiment of the Black & Tans (uniform club) stage their Mr. Regiment Leather contest at the Gauntlet II and in London, the new Mr. Hoist Leather will be chosen at the Hoist, both on Saturday night.

You'd have to have a private jet to make all these events, but there will be sufficient crowds at all of them so don't feel disloyal if you can't be at any of these events. Have fun wherever you appear.

RRR changes hands; Loading Dock to close

Word spread rapidly around Northern California last week when it was announced that the Triple R (Russian River Resort),

long the mainstay of leather folks, had been sold (through Hearth Realty & Bob Young) by Ray Allen. The new owners are Scott Mandell and Ray Shahani. Immediately remodeling will take place with new carpets, revamping the restaurant, and installation of Internet access.

On the other hand leather people were saddened to learn that the Loading Dock on San Francisco's Mission Street will be closing and the last day of business will be on Sunday, March 13. The bar has weathered nine Folsom Street Fairs, eight Dore Alley Fairs, and thousands of hot leather men all under the directorship of owner Mark Dreier.

Between now and then, there will be the last Bondage Night (Friday, February 18); Last Rubber Night (Friday, February 25); and the last Boot Night (Friday, March 4). The de-commissioning of club banners will take place at 2300 on Saturday, Mar. 5th.

The final four days of the Loading Dock will be the Last Uniform Night (Friday, March 11), Loading Dock Auction (of bar art, posters and other iconic items) will be on Saturday, March 12 (with previews on Thursday and Friday March 10 & 11) with a silent auction at 2100. It's all cash and carry. Last Call is Sunday, March 13.

Sash update

The Heart of America Leather Family weekend in Kansas City, Mo. was deemed a success by all that attended the workshops there and the contests. There were no

next page ►

BOOKS

Truth & consequences

by Jim Piechota

Sexy by Joyce Carol Oates;
HarperCollins, \$16.99

At 67, prolific, award-winning author Joyce Carol Oates continues to demonstrate incredible dexterity and personal creativity with books featuring unique themes that appeal to a wide range of audiences.

Her latest follows high school senior Darren Flynn, a handsome, competitive young adult in tiny North Falls, New Hampshire, who seems to have it all together. He's a promising member of the swim team, has a smitten friend Molly who adores him, has lots of friends (albeit stereotypically homophobic), gets good grades, and is the shining star of the family.

Everything changes when Darren accepts a ride home from swim practice from Lowell Tracy, the school's sensitive but stern English teacher. Stuck in a car during the whiteout conditions of



a New England blizzard, "something" happens between the men, though Oates never specifically alludes to anything in particular, only that Darren has been irreversibly altered, and he will continue his denial of the "nothing" that happened for the rest of the novel.

Jimmy Kovaks, the most powerful swimmer in the school, cheats on his English paper, and

Tracy fails him, causing his expulsion from the team even as Darren receives a curiously undeserved good grade. The team's vengeance, in the form of a bogus incriminating letter, forces a persecuted Mr. Tracy to take an "indefinite medical leave," and soon the town is abuzz with a shocking "gay sex crimes" scandal. Mr. Tracy appeals to Darren to act as a character witness, and the emotional pressure mounts from his parents, his observant, slacker brother Eddy, and the police detectives who call him for a statement.

Suffused with a silent aching that many young men will relate to, the plot continues churning with denial, suspicion, and remorse — and a sudden accidental death that throws everyone into a tailspin.

Though the book is aimed at young adults with a congenial, G-rated, afterschool-special sensibility, it carries such a vital theme and so compelling a message that it will appeal to and affect everyone. A powerful story, beguilingly told. ▼

Mister Marcus

◀ previous page

contestants for Heart of America Leather Man and Woman and none for Heart of America Leather Girl, but Ryan Setzkom was awarded the title Heart of America Leather boy in a field of four contestants. Dale Rush, who won the title last year, was prevailed upon to carry the title for yet another year, so he will trek once more to ABW in April. For more info, click on www.HOALeather.com.

Randal Kinnear and Donna "Mera" Harned step aside as Mr. and Ms. South Plains Leather 2004 the weekend of February 25-27 as the South Plains Leather Fest takes place and the International Master & Slave contests are part of the weekend. Ron Zimmerman and slave Tony will also pass their sashes to successors the same weekend. Always a great weekend in Dallas for these two competitions and Texas hospitality is always perfect. I understand this year's attendance will be above normal so it looks like a hot time in the old town again. The Dallas Eagle will be hopping again!

Well, hope you're able to attend at least one of the big leather events this coming weekend. It will be a leather pastiche from coast to coast. Hope to see you around. ▼



Meet "Cody", Mr. Gauntlet II Leather, who was chosen earlier this year and will advance to the Mr. L.A. Leather contest in March.

EVENTURES IN LEATHER

Weekend, February 17-21

So many events! Imperial Coronation, International Bear Rendezvous and Motorcycle Awards in San Francisco; Mr. Cell Block Leather, Pantheon of Leather, and Mortgage Burning at the Leather Archives & Museum in Chicago; Mr. & Ms. Philadelphia Leather; Mr. Regiment Leather contest in LA; and Mr. Hoist Leather in London.

Thursday, February 17

Bare Chest Calendar contest at the Powerhouse in San Francisco at 2200. Who will win the 4th round?

Friday, February 18

The Exiles of SF present Novices Night for those women interested in the bdsm lifestyle. It's at The Women's Building near 18th & Valencia.

Monday, February 21

Girls of San Francisco have their second meeting at The Citadel (245 8th St.) for those women who

identify as "girls."

Wednesday, February 23

Leather Buddies gather at 933 Harrison St. You know the rules: leather, latex, uniforms. No white sneakers. No cologne. No sissy attitude. For information: 777-HEAD.

Weekend, February 24-27

South Plains Leatherfest in Dallas, Texas with the Mr. and Ms. South Plains Leather contests and Int'l. Master & slave competition. Most of the action at the Dallas Eagle.

Thursday, February 24

Bare Chest Calendar competition at the Powerhouse tonight at 2200. A painless way (they say) to do volunteerism work.

Friday, February 25

Mr. Ringold Alley Leather contest at The Hole in San Diego. Winner advances to Mr. San Diego Leather contest in March.

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The spirit and the flesh

'Conspiracy of Silence' plays like TV-movie

by David Lamble

A young priest disrupts a solemn Vatican conclave with the shout of "The Church has AIDS!" A gaggle of very humpy young seminarians play a robust lacrosse match and check out each other's butts in the locker-room showers. Young priests-to-be engage in gossipy banter about "the queer fella" in their class. Later that night, that queer fella makes a unrequited pass at the guy we know is the hero of our story. An older, befuddled priest snitches on the pair to the head of the school, and both young men are expelled. An embittered priest who is HIV-positive takes his own life, leaving a suicide note, and providing a jolt to the readers of the local weekly paper.

John Deery's *Conspiracy of Silence* crashes out of the gates with all the fury of a modern-day Luther indicting the elders of the Catholic Church for the crime of hypocrisy, and for foisting the impossible demands of celibacy onto the shoulders of young men who have barely grasped the teachings of Kinsey. *Conspiracy of Silence* plays like an impassioned Op Ed piece in *The Irish Times* or *The New York Times*. It would make a fantastic *Hallmark Sunday Night Movie* on CBS. It exactly echoes my own feelings on the subject. Why, then, did I feel somewhat shortchanged?

Conspiracy's screenplay (by first-time director Deery) feels like it has been tweaked one time too many by the makers of those insidious screenwriting-software

A talented cast in *Conspiracy* comes close to explaining the remaining emotional pull of the backwards collar.

programs. The central character, Daniel McLaughlin (played by the impossibly handsome and ruddy-cheeked young actor Jonathan Forbes), comes off as a man in search of a real problem, not as a character truly torn between the spirit and the flesh. Once he dries his tears, he'll find he's well rid of the Church, and will marry the girl and morph into an Irish Gavin Newsom, with the world as

his oyster.

Convincingly set in a real-appearing Irish country parish (actually Cornwall, England has been dressed up to look like Ireland,

which is a funny statement in its own right), *Conspiracy* misses a golden opportunity to delve into the real reasons why Church fathers resist allowing their club to

turn into the homosexual social-service agency that most of the world already thinks it is. A talented cast, including Jim Norton as the Machiavellian Bishop Quinn, who uses the priesthood as his own personal brothel, and the soulful John Lynch as the heartsick ex-lover of the dead priest, come close, with their conflicted body language, to explaining the remaining emotional pull of the backwards collar. Had this story been *Conspiracy's* centerpiece instead of its tabloid come-on, this might have been a real film, as opposed to a TV-movie on a big screen. (Now playing.)

Oddly enough, there's more about the real tension between the needs of the body and the soul in an 18-minute short film that played at this year's *Indie Fest* earlier this month. Actor-turned-director Andrew McCarthy has turned a Frank O'Connor short story, *News for the Church*, into an impassioned glimpse about why people still feel the pull of the confession booth. The film features Nora-Jane Noone, who made such a devastating impression as one of the young women falsely imprisoned by the Church in *The Magdalene Sisters*, as a 19-year-old woman who decides to confide to a not totally unsympathetic priest why the sex she had at 15 so totally took over her life. ▼

The invisible children

'Nobody Knows' they're all alone in Tokyo

by David Lamble

Early on in his funny, poignant and harrowing tribute to the fate of latchkey children *Nobody Knows*, Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda gives us the rules of the game. A mother and her 12-year-old son move with several large suitcases into a tiny apartment on the out-

skirts of Tokyo. Out of the luggage pop three smaller kids. Mom tells her oldest boy, Akira, that he's in charge, that only he can go outside to shop for their daily necessities. She warns the other children that if they make too much noise, or even step out on the balcony, the landlord will realize they exist and evict the whole family.

Based on a real story about four children, born of different fathers, forbidden to attend school, and, in fact, legally invisible because their births were never declared, *Nobody Knows* is a thoroughly engrossing if chilling account of the lives of the children as they eat, play and dream about their futures, each night expecting that Mommy will be home from work to cook for them, to read to them, and to celebrate the small epiphanies of their tiny world.

In a casting coup as significant as Francois Truffaut's discovery of Jean-Pierre Leaud as his film alter-ego, 12-year-old Antoine Doinel, in *The 400 Blows*, Kore-eda has chosen first-time actor Yagira Yuya to be Akira, a boy who will literally become a man before our eyes, who will have to negotiate on behalf of his siblings with an adult world completely oblivious to their existence. Yuya's Akira goes from a well-groomed, prepubescent lad eager to show off his home-schooling grasp of elementary Japanese to a lanky, haunted adolescent whose hopes have dropped along with his voice, whose boy-band good looks are offset by cares more suited to a middle-aged widower. Akira refuses to call child welfare because that would only result in the big-

ger disaster of separation.

Close encounters

The film's eerie power over us derives in part from all the story-telling motifs that Kore-eda firmly rejects: this is no *Lord of the Flies* fable of feral kids descending into barbarism, this isn't a *Cement Garden* tale of sibling incest, nor a Dickensian portrait of tykes tossed into workhouses or exploited by Fagin-like street creatures. Many of the encounters Akira has with the outside world have a mildly upbeat twist: a convenience-store owner who accuses him of shoplifting later relents when the charge is refuted by an employee. The shop assistant portrayed by Japanese pop-star late Takako provides Akira with life-sustaining food handouts. The deadbeat dad of a cab-driver coughs up some spare change. Late in the film, Akira is even miraculously picked as a substitute outfielder by a short-handed high school coach. But *Nobody Knows* is not *The Bad News Bears Go to Japan*.

There are no real villains. Even Mom, as effervescingly portrayed by the Japanese TV actress Yui, is depicted as a fairy-like sprite whose good intentions are overcome by a fickle nature. You's curiously childlike voice smacks of a Tokyo-bred Melanie Griffith.

One of the film's darkest moments occurs when Akira learns that Mom has remarried and is now forever lost to them. The boy responds by taking his siblings on a shopping trip for toys and comfort food. Kore-eda points his cameras at the small joys of childhood. As the seasons pass, a girl

next page ►

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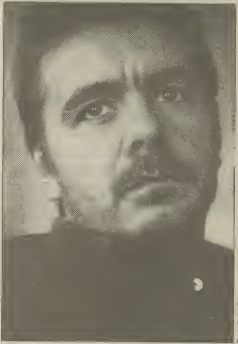
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MUSIC

Remixology

by Gregg Shapiro

When someone such as Laurent Garnier, who is known for making people dance, releases a "personal" album such as *The Cloud Making Machine* by Laurent Garnier (Mute), listeners should pay attention. Exploring other musical avenues, Garnier remains faithful



Garnier goes personal on new album

to the electro beats, but doesn't limit himself to 120 bpm or higher. On "9:01-9:06," for instance, he seems to be encouraging dancers to improvise in the same way he is, swerving in and out of traditional dance rhythms. Garnier exhibits a world music awareness on the atmospheric "Huis Clos," but you're wondering if there's anything to dance to here. "First Reaction (V2)" has a hip-hop vibe that is easy to move to, but it's not until track seven, the aptly-titled house hoo-down "Controlling the House, Pt. 2," that the diehard dance-heads will actually get to express themselves. "(I Wanna Be) Waiting for my Plane" is a Velvet Underground-influenced dance-rock excursion that soars above Garnier's cloud-making machinery, and "Jeux D'Enfants" has a childlike exuberance.

Legendary remixer The Scumfrog knows which side his bread is buttered on, and doesn't stray at all from the explosive dance beats that make him such an in-demand producer and artist on his latest album, *Simmer* (Effin). With an ear to the streets, The Scumfrog sets the disc off right with "Set It Off," a track that combines dance rhythms and rock energy. "Come On" conjures Mick Jagger and the Stones in their short-lived disco heyday, and the title-track manages both to simmer and sizzle at the same time. "Domino" is the kind of dance track that is capable of setting off a chain reaction on the dance floor, and the New Wavy "Bacon," featuring guest vocals by Lucy Woodward, is

good enough to eat — and I'm a vegetarian! "F Karma," with its gospel-vocal eruption, may be the closest thing to a religious experience you will have in a club, and "One Thing" is an utterly irresistible and demanding dance-blast.

Soul mix

It was only a matter of time before the purveyors of remix culture turned their attention to vintage soul. Sure, there have been earlier examples of this, such as Diana Ross' *Diana Extended/The Remixes*, on which Frankie Knuckles and Maurice Joshua reinvented retro numbers such as "Someday We'll Be Together" and "I'm Coming Out." But with *Mayfield: Remixed - The Curtis Mayfield Collection* (Rhino), one of the true sacred cows of '70s soul, the late Curtis Mayfield, has been given the remix treatment. House-music legend Maurice Joshua is one such remixer, and his Nu Soul Mix of "(Don't Worry) If There's a Hell Below, We're All Going To Go" from Mayfield's 1970 solo debut is transformed into a truly underground track. "Move On Up," from the same disc, becomes the dance anthem it was always intended to be through Eric Kupper's vocal mix. "Superfly," "Freddie's Dead" and "Pusherman," three of Mayfield's best-known and beloved tracks, all from the groundbreaking 1972 soundtrack to "Superfly," are also updated with beats to burn by Little Louie Vega, Blaze, and Mixmaster Mike, respectively. Mayfield's legendary spiritual side is also pumped up through Eddie Baez's Laid Back Mix of "We Got To Have Peace" and StoneBridge's slamming Club Remix of The Impressions' "People Get Ready."

Making its domestic debut with *Kicking the National Habit* (Sunday Best), UK duo Grand National also has a retro feel pulsing through its songs. It doesn't stretch as far back as the early-to-mid-'70s, but it does have echoes of the Police, a band that was definitely an influence for at least one-half of Grand National. In fact, there are moments where the vocals on a song such as "Playing in the Distance" distinctly recall Sting. Like other organic dance bands, however, Grand National infuses its music with a humanity that electro-only groups tend to come up short on, or disregard altogether. Unabashed dance-floor work-outs include funk-driven "Drinking To Moving On," the brassy, ska-touched "Boner," the slinky beat of "Peanut Dreams," the vintage Latin disco of "Cherry Tree," the New Wave disco of "North Sound Off," and "Playing in the Distance." ▼

Nobody Knows

◀ previous page

reluctantly abandons a toy piano.

As the garbage piles up, the money runs out, and disconnected utilities make the tiny flat as comfortable as a domicile as an abandoned Alcatraz cellblock, the kids reluctantly take to the streets, doing their laundry and daily bathing in the waters of a park fountain. If these children were separated from worried parents by tsunami waves, we would be hooked up for an *Oprah*-like happy reunion. The fact that actual parents don't long to recover them is an emotional *non sequitur*,

as discomforting as a *New York Times* headline from a few years back: "Lab Chimps Face Hazy Future."

Kore-eda, who confesses to have woven a part of his own neglected childhood and actor Yuya's actual growth-spurts into the heartbreaking portrait of Akira, dramatizes the uncomfortable truth that neglect can be a more insidious crime than even the most malicious forms of abuse.

In America, we like to think that these children would win an *Extreme Home Makeover*. *Nobody Knows* substitutes the emotional sucker-punch of too much knowledge and no easy fixes. (*Opens Friday*.) ▼

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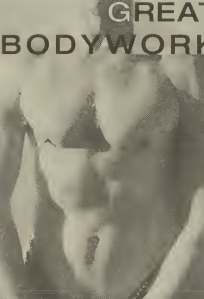
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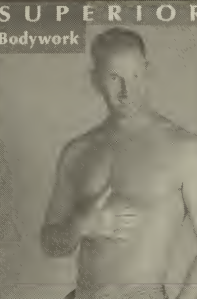
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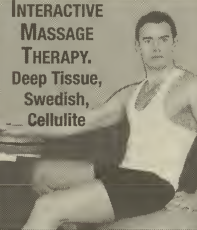
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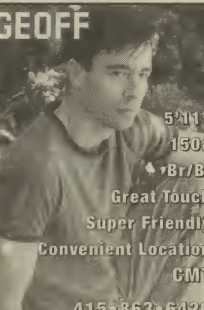
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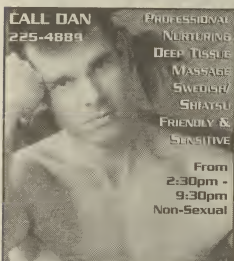
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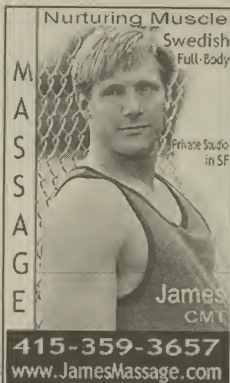
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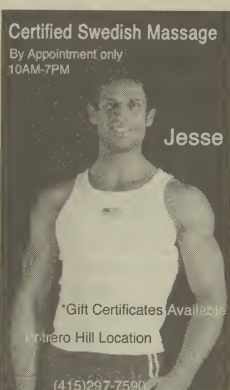
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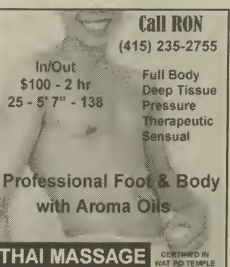


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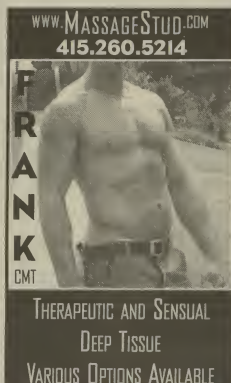
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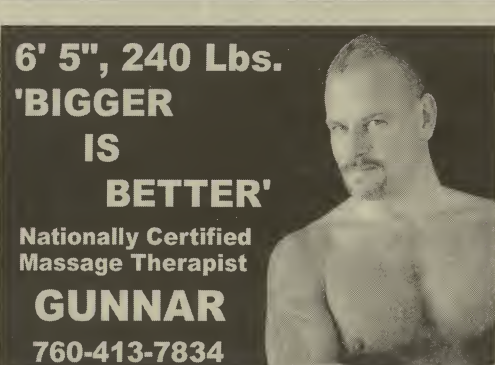


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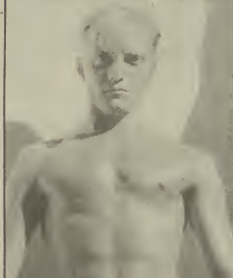
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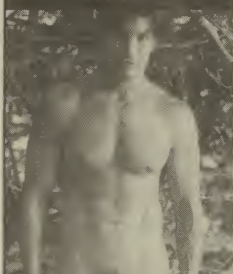
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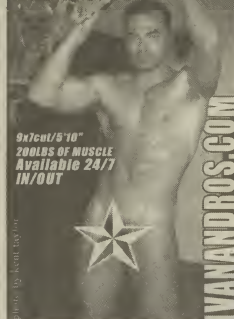


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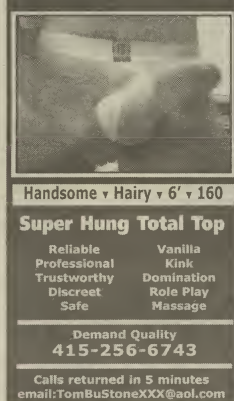
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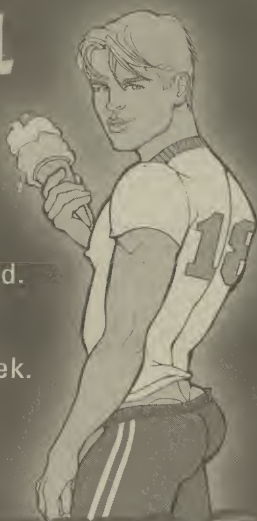
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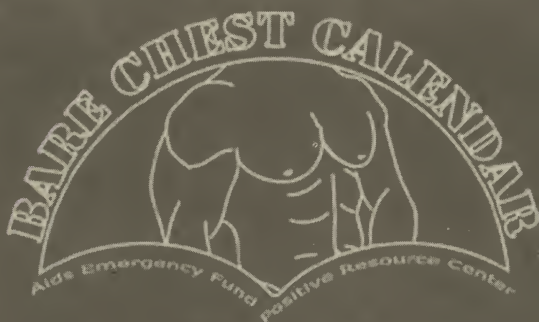
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